Seventeenth Series, Vol. VIII No 17 Friday, March 13, 2020

Phalguna 23, 1941 (Saka)

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Third Session

(Seventeenth Lok Sabha)

(Vol. VIII Contains Nos.11 to 23)

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Friday, March 13, 2020/ Phalguna 23, 1941 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[**HON. SPEAKER** *in the Chair*]

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, the House sat until midnight last night. I expect that the House will continue to function in the same spirit, even late into the night, so that the faith of the people of the country in this temple of democracy is further strengthened.

11.01 hrs

*ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

HON. SPEAKER: Question No. 281, Shrimati Rama Devi.

(Q. 281)

SHRIMATI RAMA DEVI: Sir, in our country, women and children are often victims of disease in aboriginal, backward, slum, and rural areas. The facilities of the government in these areas are very limited compared to cities, which is a matter that requires the government's attention. Malnutrition is a multidimensional problem.

HON. SPEAKER: Ask questions.

SHRIMATI RAMA DEVI: Its primary causes are inadequate and imbalanced nutrition, and poverty, due to which women become physically weak. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what programmes such as the Janani Suraksha Yojana, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, SUMAN, and other related initiatives are being implemented for the holistic improvement of women's health, including those in tribal, backward, slum and rural areas. If the Hon.

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* **For Questions, please visit** https://sansad.in/ls/questions/questions-and-answers .

Minister could provide details of these programmes, it would help Members gain clarity. We would also like to know how much awareness about these initiatives has reached the people in our respective areas. Thank you.

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Hon. Speaker Sir, through you, I would like to inform the Hon. Member that from the perspective of women's health, not only the Ministry of Women and Child Development but also the Ministry of Health undertakes extensive work. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that when the Ayushman Bharat scheme was launched, there was little expectation that it would have such a significant impact on women's health in particular. According to the figures available so far, subject to correction, as the Hon. Minister of Health is himself present in the House, more than one crore women in our country have undergone screening for breast cancer under Ayushman Bharat, and more than seventy lakh women have been screened for cervical cancer.

Sir, during the entire week when we observed Women's Day as a nationwide celebration, the data compiled by the Ministry of Health during that period, again subject to correction, indicates that more than six crore women across the country availed themselves of services under Ayushman Bharat at wellness centres and health

facilities. This one week figure clearly demonstrates how women's health is being addressed not only by the Ministry of Women and Child Development but by all departments of the Government of India working in coordination to deliver these services.

SHRIMATI RAMA DEVI: Sir, the hard work of the Hon. Minister is clearly visible in the villages. It may not be as evident in urban areas, but in rural regions her efforts are being seen. The manner in which she has proactively reached out to the people and led the fight against malnutrition deserves appreciation. I thank her for this commitment. Her awareness initiatives and understanding are reaching the villages, though they need to reach them at an even faster pace.

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Sir, with reference to the concern expressed by the Hon. Member, I would like to state that from the perspective of women's nutrition, the Government not only ensures the provision of take home rations, vaccinations and supplements, but also addresses maternal safety, as rightly mentioned by the Hon. Member. In this regard, we have identified more than twelve lakh high risk pregnancies so that appropriate health services can be provided to them. This would not be possible unless we work in close coordination with State Governments as well as district administrations. I take this opportunity to express

my appreciation that district administrations are equally vigilant and committed on these issues.

SHRIMATI POONAMBEN MAADAM: Hon. Speaker Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to ask my question.

Under the leadership of our Hon. Prime Minister, several steps are being taken with regard to the health of women and children. The Hon. Minister has also elaborated on these initiatives in her reply. In the same response, reference has been made to the National Family Health Survey for the year 2015–16. According to this survey, the measures taken by us have resulted in significant improvement in health outcomes in tribal areas.

Sir, we are all aware that even today India has the highest number of anaemic women and malnourished children in the world. This is a matter of concern for our Government as well, and a great deal of work is being undertaken in this direction. The report has also put forward several suggestions to eliminate and address this problem. One of the key suggestions is that regular meetings should be held with the Departments of Education, Social Justice, Labour and Tribal Development, and that an action plan should be prepared through such meetings so that this issue can be tackled more effectively. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister how many such meetings have been held over the past one year, and if meetings

have been held, what conclusions or outcomes have emerged from them.

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Sir, through you, I would like to inform the Hon. Member that we do not confine consultations and meetings to a fixed time period alone. Whenever any specific issue is brought before the Government from any State or district, all concerned Departments continuously engage with one another through meetings, teleconferences or video conferences. Under the framework created by the Hon. Prime Minister for the Poshan Abhiyaan, the Tribal Ministry, the Health Ministry, the Ministry of Human Resource Development and even the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting are all actively involved. Our constant endeavour is to maintain a focused approach towards those districts and States that are most severely affected by malnutrition, and to ensure coordinated action through sustained inter departmental collaboration.

Through you, I would also like to urge the Hon. Member and the House to note that the country is presently observing Poshan Pakhwada. The Ministry of Health, through many of its institutions, is running a special campaign on anaemia up to the 22nd of this month, under which services are being provided for the detection of anaemia and for its effective management.

Sir, through you, I would like to appeal to all Hon. Members that if they wish to undertake focused work on anaemia in their respective areas during Poshan Pakhwada, in coordination with grassroots level officers of the Health Ministry, the Ministry of Health stands fully prepared to extend all necessary support.

[English]

SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL: Sir, according to NITI Aayog, SDG Index 2019 says that more Indians have fallen into poverty, hunger and income inequality in the past two years. India secured 102nd position in Global Hunger Index. In this regard, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, through you, Sir, what steps the Government has taken to revaluate and restructure on-going schemes as they do not seem very productive, and if no step has been taken, how the Government can assure that all the targets and goals will be achieved.

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Sir, given the Hon. Member's desire to see a change, my first request, through her, to the State Government of West Bengal is to come on board Poshan Abhiyaan. I have continuously, within this House, and the other House and outside, appealed to the State for that. I had previously done so with regard to the State of Odisha. I am grateful to the Hon. Chief Minister of Odisha who has heeded to our plea and has come

on board. West Bengal, still, is not on board. If you seriously believe in supporting nutrition and better health prospects of women and children in your State, Madam, my request would be to use your good offices to ensure that you come on board on this issue, which is an issue with regard to humanity and has nothing to do with political ideology or political victory or defeat.

PROF. SOUGATA RAY: What does 'coming on board' mean? What do you want?

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: You have refused to accept the Poshan Abhiyaan. You have refused to come on board with regard to how nutrition is to be provided for women and children. You have refused to come on board with regard to the entire country…*(Interruptions)* Since, the Hon. Member wanted to know what coming on board means, in an interjection …*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please be seated.

. . . (*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: In an interjection that has not been supported by the Hon. Speaker, I should say here, Sir, that the Global Hunger Index, that the Hon. Member espouses, does not reflect a true picture, which is also a part of the supplementary

answer that I have given today to the Unstarred Question. One of the reasons why it does not give a complete picture is the old scores that it has used.

Sir, I would like, through you, to inform the House that even with regard to the international indices that look at gender perspectives, we are in communication with those organisations where we have written evidence today from them, where they have acceded to the Government of India that they have used old data and assured the Government of India, through my Ministry, that they will correct the data in the coming year. So, given that indices internationally, which have been proclaimed by the Hon. Member, have based their surmises on the basis of old data, I think the best thing that you can do, especially for women and children in the State of West Bengal is to please accept to work with us on Poshan Abhiyaan.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI GEETA KODA: Hon. Speaker Sir, this is a very serious issue. In the State from which I come, particularly in my Parliamentary Constituency of Singhbhum, there are several cases of malnutrition. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether there is any special package specifically for children in malnutrition-affected areas. Malnutrition not only affects young children, but it

is also leading to reduced height among tribal children, and pregnant women are facing severe hardship because of it.

Sir, most of the work that is being carried out is through Anganwadis. My second question is whether the Government is considering increasing the honorarium of Anganwadi workers.

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: The Hon. Member may be aware that the honorarium has been increased, and when the Hon. Supreme Court made its observations on this matter, it reiterated with due clarification that it is an honorarium.

As far as the Hon. Member has referred to issues pertaining to her area, there are indeed challenges relating to malnutrition. I would like to inform her that the Hon. Chief Minister of Assam himself, along with all departments, has taken steps on how to tackle malnutrition. ... (*Interruption*s) Hon. Speaker Sir, kindly allow me to complete my statement. Sougata ji has this delightful habit of getting up and poking his nose into every aspect, which is welcome.

HON. SPEAKER: You may reply to him in Bengali so that nobody understands what reply has been given.

[English]

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: *No, Sir. I have tried my best to explain in Bengali, but he still refuses to understand. So, I am not speaking in Bengali any more.*

My only submission, Sir, is that not only the Chief Minister of Assam, Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, and many other Chief Ministers have come forward and worked with us. If there is something particularly to be done for your constituency, Madam, we would definitely do that. I would also like to highlight, through you, Sir, that before the Session began, the Hon. Speaker went to his constituency and appealed to families to adopt one malnourished child or one malnourished pregnant lady so that there is a social *Jan Andolan*, which we hoped can be kick started through the Poshan Abhiyaan. I am grateful that the Hon. Speaker himself has set that example. If you can do such social outreach, Madam, we assure that we will in the Department of Women and Child Development support you.

HON. SPEAKER: Mulayam Singh ji, do you wish to ask something? . . . (*(Interruptions)*

* English translation of this part of the speech originally delivered in Bengali

HON. SPEAKER: I would request the Hon. Members to ask their questions briefly and that the replies also be brief, as many questions have to be taken.

... (Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: You tend to make the question itself very lengthy. Please ask brief questions so that the Hon. Minister may give brief replies.

SHRI RAVI KISHAN: Hon. Speaker Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to ask a question. I also thank the Hon. Minister, as letters regarding health awareness are regularly sent by her. Gorakhpur is my Parliamentary Constituency, and I work there accordingly. I express my gratitude to the revered Hon. Prime Minister and to the Hon. Minister.

I have one question that always troubles me. When the Union Government is providing so many facilities, and the State Government is also doing remarkable work, we still receive information from certain places when we visit villages and rural areas, whether it is Purvanchal, Bihar or regions of Uttar Pradesh, that all medicines and facilities are not reaching the last family. In this regard, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister how these facilities can be ensured to reach the very last mile. Another issue that is receiving the highest demand is related to the Jan Aushadhi Kendras

spoken about by the Hon. Prime Minister. These centres are more concentrated in urban areas. There is a strong demand from villages, and this initiative has been very successful because medicines are available at nearly 50 percent lower prices.

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Hon. Speaker Sir, the Hon. Member may be aware that the mandate of the Jan Aushadhi Kendras does not constitutionally fall under my Ministry, but I am grateful to him for expressing his appreciation to the Hon. Prime Minister on this subject. With regard to his question on how Government facilities reach the last mile, I would like to inform him that the district administration, the State Government and Members of Parliament can together act as bridges of coordination and dialogue. I would request him that if there is any such issue in his Parliamentary Constituency, he may kindly bring it to my notice.

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL: Hon. Speaker Sir, the Hon. Minister stated that Members of Parliament can do a great deal of work. Indeed, a great deal can be done. I had recently invited the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Hon. Yogi Adityanath ji, to my area. ... (*Interruption*s)

HON. SPEAKER: If you are not thanking me, then you may proceed to ask your question.

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL: Hon. Speaker Sir, I wish to ask that you have given a detailed reply regarding malnourished people in tribal and rural areas, including those suffering from malnutrition or anaemia. I would like to know that the 115 Aspirational Districts identified by the Hon. Prime Minister through NITI Aayog, of which eight districts are from Uttar Pradesh, including Siddharthnagar, are covered under the Matritva Vandana Yojana. You have mentioned a reduction target of 2 to 6 percent. For these Aspirational Districts, which are quite low on health indicators, is the Government considering any additional or separate measures?

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Hon. Speaker Sir, I would like to inform the Hon. Member that when Aspirational Districts are selected, several parameters relating to the health and nutrition of women and children are also taken into consideration. Through the Ministry, we pay special attention to Aspirational Districts in coordination with the State Governments and NITI Aayog. As regards what Members of Parliament can do from the perspective of nutrition, I would once again like to inform the entire House, through you, that Poshan Pakhwada is currently being observed. Even if nothing else, if we draw inspiration from the initiative taken by the Hon. Speaker Sir in his own Parliamentary Constituency by turning it into a people’s movement to ensure that mothers are well

nourished, I believe that this alone would enable us to make a very significant contribution from our side.

(Q.282)

[English]

SHRI HIBI EDEN: The decision to waive-off the environmental clearance for the on-shore and off-shore gas as well as oil exploration projects could have serious consequences on the islands, fishing areas, breeding grounds, and migratory routes. The said decision could also risk serious damage. The spilled oil can also settle down on the sea bed and can destroy the eco-system. A large section of fishing community will be deprived of their livelihood and occupation.

In my constituency, there is an Indian Oil Corporation's LPG storage plant which has been given provisional environmental clearances by the MoEF. But the State has also given recommendations that the '200 metres' stipulation should be given clearance from the High Tide Line. There are around 6000 people staying nearby in two wards. There are concerns regarding serious health hazards among the people.

Will the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change take necessary steps in this regard? Why is that the MoEF giving such clearances without prior notices? Why is such a decision taken by the Union Government?

SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO: First of all, I would like to thank my Hon. Colleague for bringing up this issue. There are certain clarifications that we really need to give you. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has not exempted these kinds of projects in terms of giving environment clearances. Rather in tune with our Hon. Prime Minister's 'Minimum Government – Maximum Governance', we have actually decentralised it and given it to the State Governments to decide. There is a very robust process that goes through in giving environmental clearances for this thing.

First of all, we have divided this into three categories. The NDZ is in CRZ-III and the area is '200 metres' from the High Tide Line, as you have said. It is a 'No Development Zone'. So, we have given it to the State Governments. The State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) is the one who along with the State Coastal Zone Management Authority, is going to study it and then issue clearances. The State Environmental Assessment Committee, which is the SEAC, is going to take care of not only the Environmental Protection Act, but also the Air and Water Acts to ensure that such pollution, as you are saying, does not happen on the sea-shore. The State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) is also very much involved in the entire process.

So, if any such thing like spilling of oil is happening in your particular constituency, I would love to address that problem in coordination with the State Government. I would be more than happy to solve it for you.

SHRI HIBI EDEN: Sir, what you have answered is not exactly right because the '200 metres' stipulation has not been followed by the particular Vypeen IOC project. But I would like to ask another question.

The CRZ law came into being in 1991. Later, it came in the year 2011 as a new CRZ law. In 2018, it was again revised for ports, defence and oil tankers. There are around 26,800 fishermen' houses which are built on this coastal area in the 50 metres zone. According to the verdict of the Hon. Supreme Court, the State Government has made a survey whereby these many people are going to lose their houses because these houses were built before 1991 and they are in a dilapidated condition. The people have to re-build these houses. But the CRZ clearance is not being given. In 2014, Shri Oommen Chandy – when he was the Chief Minister of Kerala -- had submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to exempt the fishermen community from this. Many corporates have been given exemptions. Many defence projects, oil projects, and exploration projects have been given exemptions. But why is the fishermen community not being given

exemption? The fishermen community is living near the sea. Their livelihood is being lost and they are the under-privileged community of our society. So, their livelihood has to be protected. So, kindly exempt the fishermen community from this Zone.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): You have raised a very good and important issue. Let me clarify and explain to you that in any case, the fishermen, who are staying near the seas, will not be de-stabilised. We have asked the State Governments to create good facilities for them. We have made changes in the CRZ that were required to be done.

When we talk about sea-level rise, hurricanes, and cyclones, the fishermen are the most vulnerable habitat. They live near the sea-shores. They must be protected and must be given good facilities. That is the policy of the Government. …*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: You are a learned Member, but please refrain from doing such things in the House, particularly with reference to the Chair.

[English]

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI KARUNANIDHI: The Hon. Minister in his reply has said that they have not exempted the hydrocarbon exploration projects from the environmental clearances.

So, I would like to find out from the Hon. Minister as to how many of these hydrocarbon wells -- currently operational in Cauvery Basin, which is the rice-bowl of Tamil Nadu -- have environmental clearances. I would also like to ask the Hon. Minister how many of the abandoned well sites have been decommissioned and restored as per law? How many such sites have been re-meditated and restored to its original condition as per law? It is because it is a very important problem in the State of Tamil Nadu and it can completely ruin agriculture in the State.

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Hon. MPs from Tamil Nadu, from all sides, met me. We discussed the issue in detail. I made it very clear to them and even in the reply also I have made it clear that we have not done away with environmental clearance. We have not done away with the Water and Air Acts. We have not exempted the provisions of these Acts. What we have done is that earlier file used to come to Delhi for clearance and now we have delegated that power to the States. You should welcome it. Now, in all States there

will be no delay. The State Environment Assessment Committee will take decisions and put conditions. They know better the local conditions. Therefore, we have not exempted the provisions. We have delegated the power to the States. The Hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu met me and gave me a letter. The Ministers concerned also accompanied him. I have written to them and they are all satisfied.

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI KARUNANIDHI: Sir, I have a small clarification. The Hon. Chief Minister has announced that the Cauvery Delta is going to be a protected agricultural zone. Is the Hon. Minister promising that there will not be further explorations?

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: That will have to be decided and taken care of by the State Environment Assessment Committee. The file will not come to the Union Government. That is what I am saying.

(Q. 283 and 285)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESH BIDHURI: Hon. Speaker Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the fact that Delhi has extensive industrial areas. Unlike other States, Delhi does not have industries of only one category. A wide variety of people work there and different types of industries operate side by side. There are chemical units, dyeing units and even dairy farms functioning in these areas. In such a situation, is there any plan of the Government to install Common Effluent Treatment Plants there? This is particularly important because, through the NGT, these units constantly face the threat of punitive action.

Sir, I would like to congratulate the Union Government that, under the leadership of Hon. Shri Modi ji, a decision has been taken that in the Delhi NCR, even a small company or a micro or small enterprise employing up to 11 people can now operate with an electricity load of 11 horsepower instead of the earlier limit of 5 horsepower. However, the NGT continues to keep a sword hanging over these units by alleging pollution in these areas. The compulsion they face is that there is no Common Effluent Treatment Plant available there. Different kinds of chemicals are used, and there should be a facility to purify them so that the treated

water can be retained locally and used for purposes such as gardening, thereby preventing the spread of pollution. Within the South Delhi Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency, there are the Okhla Phase I, Phase II and Phase III industrial areas. These industrial areas were established nearly 50 years ago. Today, due to pressure from the NGT and the absence of such facilities for small industries, people are being compelled to migrate elsewhere. If industries move out of Delhi, people are forced to travel long distances, as has happened near Noida where Shaheen Bagh has emerged, and citizens have to take detours of four to four and a half kilometres to commute.

SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO: First, I would like to clarify at the outset that there are 193 CETPs across the country. I thank the Hon. Member for raising this very important issue before the House. Of these, 13 CETPs are located in Delhi alone. Across the country, 26 additional CETPs are under consideration. However, since the Hon. Member has specifically raised the issue of Delhi, I am addressing that point.

HON. SPEAKER: His question is whether you will set up CETPs there. Please respond to that question.

SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO: I would like to inform the Hon. Member that the Delhi Pollution Control Committee has recently

conducted a survey. In that survey, it was found that the existing CETPs in Delhi are presently adequate. However, with regard to improving their functioning and keeping in view the directions of the Hon. NGT, we are working in a comprehensive manner to ensure full compliance.

SHRI RAMESH BIDHURI: Sir, what the Hon. Minister has just stated is specific to only one purpose. First, I want to ask about Common Effluent Treatment Plants, because all kinds of effluents are generated there. This was the point I raised in my first supplementary. Second, I want to ask that small entrepreneurs do not have sufficient capital. They are not in a position to set up individual plants. Will the Government formulate a scheme under which cooperative societies or cooperative companies can be formed, incentives can be provided to them, and they can set up such plants collectively? If the Government takes such an initiative, these entrepreneurs will be able to establish them with limited capital.

SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO: Sir, with regard to what the Hon. Member has stated about micro and small industries, I would like to inform the House that the Ministry of MSME has formulated specific schemes for this purpose. Under these schemes, up to 70 Percent grant is provided by the Government of India, whether one

calls it a subsidy or otherwise, provided that the maximum project cost is below Rs. 15 crore. I am stating this only for information. In the North Eastern and hilly regions, the Union Government provides up to 90 Percent funding for effluent treatment plants. The Hon. Member is correct in pointing out that, at times, different types of industries operate in the same area. I would request the Hon. Member to share details regarding the nature of industries functioning in his region. If such information is provided, we will certainly make all efforts to re-examine the matter thoroughly.

HON. SPEAKER: Question No. 285 is also clubbed .

[English]

Shri Dhairyasheel Sambhajirao Mane – Not present.

DR. SUJAY VIKHE PATIL: Sir, the Government had brought the National Clean Air Programme in January 2020 which included measures for reducing industrial emissions in which 102 cities were included. To make the NCAP effective in achieving breathable air quality across the country, the air quality targets and specific measures identified in the NCAP must be given a proper legal status. My question, through you, to the Hon. Minister is whether the Ministry is considering giving legal status to NCAP by notifying it under any Act to ensure better compliance and time bound actions to achieve the goals under the NCAP by 2024.

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: NCAP is a programme of the Union Government's eight missions. So, this is a programme to be taken on a mission mode, and therefore, it is the most prioritized programme. In the first batch, we have taken 102 cities where problem of pollution exists and we want to ensure that the pollution levels will recede. We are first giving the instalment to prepare the DPR because city-specific pollutants are different and city-specific answers and solutions are also different. Therefore, we ned to build a city-specific plan. That is the idea of NCAP.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, shall Question No. 289 also be clubbed?

... (Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: In the course of the discussion, his question has been covered. Shrimati Supriya Sule.

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SADANAND SULE: I would like to remind the Hon. Minister that when the meeting of our DISHA Committee was held in Pune, this issue was also discussed at that time. I would request him if he could kindly clarify it. You have said in Maharashtra, inspections were conducted in several MIDCs and you made sure that they are stopped. In my Parliamentary Constituency, at Daund, there is an MIDC at Kurkumbh, which is a chemical MIDC. You are also aware that due to rapid urbanisation,

many cities, including Pune, from where Shri Prakash and I both come, are witnessing a significant increase in pollution, even due to housing activities. For instance, in areas like Khadakwasla, buildings are coming up in what were earlier rural areas. [English] So, can we have a clubbed, joint programme for the effluents which come maybe out of housing or this and keep a check on it because thanks to urbanisation growing at a very fast speed in all second and third tier cities, all our drinking water sources are getting polluted. So, do you have a specific plan in this regard? The States do not seem to have a plan. Can you guide us and throw some light on it?

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: As you know and as Supriya Ji knows, the Kurkumbh industrial area is on the hillock and as there are so many chemical industries, there is a treatment plant separately. Let me recall that in 1992, my first struggle on environment was against SN Dyechem factory which was polluting and impacting the farms of nearby farmers and we closed it down. At that time, I was not the Minister, but still our agitation could do that. So, now we have already taken action. We are monitoring it. There is a monitor on the chimney of each factory and on the water discharge point also. We have 24 x 7 monitoring mechanism. In my cabin, in CPCB and in SPCBs, there are monitoring windows where you get the status of each factory in every 15 minutes showing

whether it is polluting or not polluting or whether it is following the norms or not.

Every week we take a review and do it and in that process, we inspect it. There are certain other surprise inspections also. Nearly 700 inspections were carried out; 347 industries were found non-complaint. They were closed. They were given notice, a little time and many of them improved their situation, but we have closed 40 factories.

[Translation]

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Hon. Speaker Sir, under the SMS Alert Scheme, seventeen industries have been identified for monitoring pollution, which includes the cement industry as well. Inspections have been carried out in 134 cement industries. I would like to know which cement industries in Madhya Pradesh have been inspected and what the findings of those inspections are.

SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO: Hon. Speaker Sir, inspections are conducted through randomisation software at intervals of three months, six months and nine months, based on the categorisation of industries into red and green categories. Information is received through SMS alerts. The Hon. Member has raised a question regarding a specific region. I would request the Hon. Member to

kindly provide us with the specific details, and I would be more than happy to provide him the answer on that.

HON. SPEAKER: I wish to facilitate a constructive debate during Question Hour. I request Hon. Members to ask brief questions, and I also request the Hon. Ministers to give brief replies, so that detailed issues can be discussed effectively.

SHRI BHAGWANT MANN: Hon. Speaker Sir, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister a question. The very name Punjab signifies water, five rivers. Recently, the National Green Tribunal imposed a penalty of Rs. 50 crore on the Punjab Government because industrial effluents from Ludhiana are being discharged into the Sutlej river.

The NGT has taken cognisance of the industries in Punjab, and you are also aware of this matter. Due to industrial activity, the waters of the Sutlej and the Beas rivers are getting polluted. I would like to know whether any action is being taken by the Government in this regard.

[English]

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: As our notifications are justiciable, so people go to NGT or any other forum and whatever cases are before the benches of NGT or various courts, we definitely

do inspect them, but at the same time, if you also have some specific instances or information, we will definitely take follow up actions.

DR. SHASHI THAROOR: I am grateful for the Hon. Minister's reply. The point, however, is that he has not addressed some of the basic policies/criteria to be involved in setting up of these new plants. He has mentioned about the plants under construction and the plants where proposals have been considered, but we all know that in setting up effluent treatment plants, there has to be a trade-off between deciding a location somewhere near the city that will facilitate the cost of procurement of industrial waste to be treated, but also balance it with lowering the cost of the disposal of treated waste once you have treated it. Now, the problem is that in many cases, your plants are, as the very first question pointed out, near urban populated areas. My question to the Minister is, have you taken into account the impact of the location of such plants on the nearby populations? When you go to the urban areas, one of our great problems which we certainly have witnessed in Kerala in the context of waste treatment and not industrial, as a general policy issue, is the impact of these plants on human beings, the accumulation of waste and its getting into the water affecting the ground water, toxicity in the air etc. All of these things have created serious inconvenience for people living in the proximity of such plants. So, the question is whether there is a policy in this regard.

Have you got any criteria worked out? Do you do an impact assessment on the wellbeing of ordinary human beings before you situate the plant?

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Sir, this is a very good question. The issue is, CTEP plants are decided by the City Corporations or the city authorities. They have to take into consideration all the local factors. But let me tell you good news. The good news is, the technology has changed so fast that the new CTEPs do not really create problems because they also use sludge to create energy which runs it. At the same time, the effluent discharge or treated water is also used for irrigation and many other purposes. They are also used for cooling the thermal power stations nearby. All these are new developments. Let us understand that our rivers are not bad. There is a song - Ganga maili ho gayi, papiyoan ke paap dhote-dhote. It is not true. The fact is, 70 per cent sewage goes untreated to the water bodies and 50 per cent of sewage treatment plants were non-functional because the agency that constructed the plant does not operate it, while the operator claims that the plant was not constructed properly. When the builder is questioned, the response is that the operator does not know how to run it. What we are doing now is, operator and builder will be the same person so that he will have no excuse to give and he will have to

maintain it for ten years.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: At the request of Hon. Members, Question Nos. 287, 288, 289, 293 and 300 are clubbed together.

[English]

SUSHRI MAHUA MOITRA: Sir, I thank you for allowing me to put a supplementary.

Sir, we seem to think that effluent treatment and the issue of industrial waste is primarily of urban areas. I represent a constituency which is 100 per cent rural and there is only one municipality. We are seeing that funding of panchayats, when it comes to solid waste disposal, is exceedingly low. Panchayats have something like Rs. 20 lakhs available to them and that too, through NREGA, to implement solid waste disposal. Besides this, we have a riverine area where River Jalangi flows through. All the panchayats have a huge problem of tapping into funding when it comes to effluent treatment even on a smaller scale. Is there any thought which the Ministry is giving to make available some kind of central funding pool which panchayats can tap into on a yearly basis, even if it is Rs. 50 lakhs or Rs. 1 crore, to do this work as this is a real problem?

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I once again request that during Question Hour, all Hon. Members should ask their questions from their respective seats. Is the House agreeable to this?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO: I agree to the point that funds are required in order to make these projects work. I will answer specifically about West Bengal without getting into the details. There is no political implication to it, but a lot of fund is provided to urban areas under the Swachh Bharat Mission. I am very sorry to say that the Government of West Bengal has not accepted those funds and has not sent them to the urban local bodies.

Even among the panchayat areas, there are several panchayats that have not received the money that is required. They definitely have the intent and directions of the State Government to do what is required for the rural areas, but they have not received the money that is required. I am more than happy to give the details of accounts to the Hon. Member. The money has been sent, but it has not been allocated correctly to the panchayat areas. A pilot project is also being developed right now. I will be more than happy to get the inputs from the Hon. Member in terms of her constituency to see that this is done in a more organized manner.

(Q. 287, 288, 289, 300)

[Translation]

SHRI MALOOK NAGAR: I often observe that a direct reply to a question is not forthcoming; officials mislead, and Ministers knowingly resort to whitewashing the matter.

HON. SPEAKER: You may confine yourself to asking the question. It is the responsibility of the Chair to look into such matters.

. . . (*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, you are not required to respond.

. . . (*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MALOOK NAGAR: Hon. Speaker Sir, I reside in Bijnor. I read the newspapers and interact with the people there. In reality, a leopard has killed seven people, but the reply states that six have been killed. You may ask me to sit down. Secondly, the Hon. Minister has stated in his reply that the entire forest area has been fenced with wire and that an electric system has been installed. This is a complete ... *. There is neither any fencing nor any electric system in place there. Seven lives have been lost.

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* Not recorded

HON. SPEAKER: This is a serious matter. It has been specifically flagged. If you have given a reply, then kindly respond to it specifically.

SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO: Sir, first of all, I am not aware of any reply from our side stating that fencing has been done across the entire area. ... (*Interruption*s) Not only leopards, but across the country there is a very large scale of human-animal conflict. It includes elephants as well. ... (*Interruption*s)

HON. SPEAKER: One minute, Hon. Member. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO: Sir, the matter relating to your area is very much within our cognisance, and it is a fact that seven persons have lost their lives. However, you are aware that in order to ensure that wild animals remain within forest areas, the Government is making all efforts inside the forests, ranging from augmentation of food to availability of water. But if one were to suggest fencing off the entire national conservation areas across the country where wild animals reside, it is not humanly possible to enclose the whole nation in this manner. There are also many tribals living in the surrounding areas who enter the forests. For them as well, there is a rehabilitation programme, under which, as you would be aware, Rs. 10 lakh is provided so that they may either construct their own

houses separately or the Government constructs houses for them. ... (*Interruption*s) I would like to state that human-animal conflict does exist, and it exists with different kinds of animals. It is extremely unfortunate that seven persons have lost their lives in your area. Animals often stray out of the forests. To prevent this, different arrangements have been made at different places. However, in a country as vast as ours, whatever measures are taken will always fall short. This is what I would like to place before the House.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, please take your seat for a moment.

... (Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, you may also take your seat.

... (Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: You are misleading the House. You have stated that the Government has replied that the work has been completed. The Government's reply clearly states that permission has been granted. It does not say that the work has been carried out. You must clarify this point. Had the Government stated that it had been completed, I would certainly have taken the matter raised by you very seriously. The Government has stated that permission has been granted. There is a difference between the two. The number of deaths is also not mentioned in the reply to the question.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI MALOOK NAGAR: Sir, just half a second... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: No, Hon. Member.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI MALOOK NAGAR: As many persons as have lost their lives, has the Government made any provision for assistance for them?

[English]

SHRI V.K. SREEKANDAN: Sir, an order was issued by the NGT on 28th August last year, and the same has to be implemented from 1st April 2020.

Sir, it is too short for any state to implement it at short notice. Therefore, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether the government would request the NGT to give some more time for the states to implement the order.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): Sir, the matter before the NGT is our

concern. We definitely take the states into confidence and jointly put together our case. Therefore, you may rest assured on this issue. But one more thing is important. The situation of lakes, even in a city like Bengaluru, is not good. People are also putting effluent into the lakes, which is not good. Therefore, they need to create separate sewage plants individually in their societies or a common plant and link it with the city drainage system. Lake protection is our treasure because that is what brings in the migrating birds. That is why we must preserve our lakes, many of which have already been destroyed.

SHRI V.K. SREEKANDAN: Sir, my second supplementary is about the Bharathappuzha River, which is the lifeline of many districts of Kerala. The existence of this famous river is under environmental threat. The experts have predicted the untimely death of the river in the near future. Therefore, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether the government has any plan to protect the Bharathappuzha River.

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as far as the Bharathappuzha River is concerned, this was not addressed in the question. But I will send the specific information on the Bharathappuzha River to the Hon. Member.

SHRI RAGHU RAMA KRISHNA RAJU: Sir, I have gone through the answer. It is a good answer. I would like to put my first supplementary question now. With regard to the clearances from the Centre in respect of Andhra Pradesh, the Polavaram Project is a very important lifeline project for us. Unless resettlement and rehabilitation clearances are obtained, we will not be able to get the package, and the project is going to be ready by December 2021, as per the reply given in the Rajya Sabha. But still, the resettlement and rehabilitation clearances are pending. So, in the interest of our state, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether he is on the move to get us the clearances on a fast track.

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Sir, as far as Question No. 289 is concerned, it is about national highways. But the Hon. Member has asked about the Polavaram Project. I have given initial permissions in my first term. The water can be stored as per the plan already sanctioned, and I wish that farmers should benefit.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: In clubbed questions, only one question is to be asked.

SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Hon. Speaker Sir, thank you. Through you, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister that the Prime Minister’s Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in the country is most adversely

affected by single-use plastic. State Governments have imposed bans on it at several places. Its implementation has also been seen in municipalities. Through you, I request the Hon. Minister to clarify whether, since many States have not taken any initiative and implementation below the municipal level, particularly in villages and along railway tracks, has not been effective, the Government will be able to make the cleanliness campaign fully effective in the coming times. As single-use plastic is the biggest cause of filth in India, will the Government bring a Bill to impose a complete ban on it? This is what I would like to ask the Hon. Minister through you.

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: The Hon. Prime Minister launched a campaign which transformed into a mass movement. That campaign is titled “Say No to Single Use Plastic”. We have communicated the complete definition of what constitutes single-use plastic to all the States. I am pleased to inform the House that 21 States have banned plastic. The remaining States are also in the process of doing so. Some States have imposed a partial ban. You would be aware that every day 20,000 tonnes of plastic are produced. Of this, 10,000 tonnes are collected, while the remaining 10,000 tonnes remain scattered. We have to do away with that. That

is our National Mission and therefore, cleanliness drives are being undertaken on beaches as well, and Blue Flag beaches are being developed. Considerable cleaning has also been carried out at railway stations. Our objective is to make the country plastic-free. I myself, along with two lakh college and school students, collected nearly 100 tonnes of plastic waste from surrounding areas within just two hours. Even in places where waste management systems are relatively robust, such conditions persist. It is our earnest desire that all of us participate collectively in this mission.

(Q. 284)

DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR: Hon. Speaker Sir, my question pertains to the facilities under the Union Government Health Scheme. While this facility is cashless for our MPs and pensioners, departmental employees and their dependants are required to incur expenses from their own pockets. Thereafter, when they submit claims for reimbursement, these are sometimes partially denied. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the Government is considering provisions to bring such employees as well under the cashless facility, which would be beneficial for them.

Dr. HARSH VARDHAN: Sir, in the month of October, we proactively invited suggestions from employees and other stakeholders on what further reforms could be introduced in the CGHS. We received a substantial number of suggestions, including several relevant to this issue. These suggestions were placed before a Committee, which studied the matter in detail and submitted its recommendations. We are currently working on those recommendations. As soon as decisions on some of these issues are finalised, we will inform the Hon. Member and this House accordingly.

DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR: Hon. Speaker Sir, my second supplementary question has two parts. Recently, several

improvements have been made in the referral system, and for persons above the age of 75 years, endorsement from the Wellness Centre is no longer required. However, 75 years is a very advanced age. Is the Government considering reducing this age limit to 60 years?

Secondly, in the case of Union Government employees, if their parents are retired from any State Government service, there is a ceiling of Rs. 9,000. If their pension exceeds Rs. 9,000, they are not eligible for this benefit. Is the Government also considering provisions for such elderly persons?

DR. HARSH VARDHAN: Sir, as I have just stated, over the past five years we have undertaken a large number of reforms. In addition to that, we are proactively keen to introduce further reforms. We have invited all kinds of suggestions from everyone, including ordinary Members of society. On those suggestions which are feasible for implementation, we will take decisions at the earliest. Once decisions are taken, we will share those decisions with this House.

[English]

SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO: Sir, the CGHS is a great scheme for the Union Government employees and pensioners for providing primary health care. But it needs major

reforms and revamping in order to make it sustainable and equitable. Again and again, we keep receiving complaints about the absence of doctors, discontinuation of visits from specialists, non-availability of medicines, etc. Especially in the current scenario, with the WHO having declared the coronavirus as a pandemic, and our government taking exemplary measures to control the spread of this virus, my question to the Hon. Minister is this: Time is of the essence in today's situation. So, is he quickly considering strengthening the infrastructure of CGHS, expanding the coverage of CGHS by opening more dispensaries, and empaneling quality hospitals and diagnostic centers in uncovered areas, including Odisha?

DR. HARSH VARDHAN: Sir, let me inform the Hon. Member that right now, we have the CGHS scheme, which is implemented in 72 cities. That is number one. In a significant majority of these 72 cities where we have the CGHS scheme, it has been created only in the last five years. That is number two.

We currently have 329 Allopathic Wellness Centres in the country. We have four hospitals that are directly linked with the CGHS. We have 86 Ayush Centres, 12.33 lakh primary cardholders, 36.08 lakh beneficiaries, 757 empaneled hospitals, 392 empaneled eye care centres, 180 empaneled dental clinics, and 241 diagnostic labs. Additionally, I must inform you that we are in the

process of creating 26 new Homeopathic units and 26 new Ayurvedic units. Furthermore, the expansion of the scheme in a number of other cities is also in the process of being worked out, depending firstly on requests and secondly on the number of employees in those particular cities.

12.00 hrs

As far as my information goes, there is no shortage of doctors in the CGHS Wellness Centres. Every CGHS Wellness Centre is well-equipped with a doctor and all the facilities. Most things are now done online. Very good quality reforms have already been introduced in the CGHS system. We are also using the help of NIC for that. We have, as I said, asked for good suggestions, and a lot of suggestions have come. They have all been assessed, reviewed, and are being considered by the Government to add further reforms to the CGHS healthcare delivery system.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: It is a fact that the CGHS institution has been suffering from inadequacy. I would like to know the ratio between the CGHS beneficiaries and the doctors.

Secondly, it has come to my notice that the Association of Healthcare Providers of India, in a recent meeting, decided to stop cashless services to CGHS and ECHS beneficiaries if the pending bills are not cleared by the Centre. The situation has worsened since

the launch of Ayushman Bharat, and the pending bills are now close to Rs. 1,600 crore. I do not know what the reaction of the Minister is.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Minister, the time allotted for Question Hour is over. If you wish to respond, you may do so.

DR. HARSH VARDHAN: Hon. Speaker Sir, I would like to state once again that there is no shortage. In areas where a large number of people reside and where there is heavy footfall, I can name the dispensaries, we have opened second and third dispensaries at such locations.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: Hon. Minister, you have been asked about the ratio. ... *(Interruptions)*

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HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have received notices of adjournment motions on certain matters. I have not allowed any of the notices of adjournment motions. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Manickam Tagore, what do you wish to say? ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI B. MANICKAM TAGORE (VIRUDHUNAGAR): Sir, one of our colleagues, Hon. MP, Shri Anumula Revanth Reddy, has been arrested in Telangana... *(Interruptions)* It is a false case registered against him because he has raised the issue of illegal occupation of 25 acres of farmhouse by a Municipal State Administration Minister... *(Interruptions)* Due to political vendetta, the TRS Government has arrested him... *(Interruptions)* You have to protect him, Sir. Since the House is in session, this should not happen. I request the Hon. Home Minister to take up this issue and brief the House about it... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NAMA NAGESWARA RAO (KHAMMAM): Hon. Speaker Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. The Hon. Member has totally misled the House. ... (*Interruption*s) A complaint was registered alleging that the Hon. Member had violated privacy by carrying out recording through a drone camera. ... (*Interruption*s) After the complaint was received, the police

questioned Durga Rajesh. During the investigation, the data from the drone camera was transferred onto a pen drive and handed over to Shri Revanth Reddy. ... (*Interruption*s) Shri Revanth Reddy visited the police station on the 5th.

We ourselves have passed the Aircraft Act. ... (*Interruption*s) Under this Act, no one is permitted to record someone's private life in this manner by using a drone camera.... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. ... *(Interruptions)*

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*WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Starred Question Nos. 286 and 290 to 299

Unstarred Question Nos. 3221 to 3450

* **For Questions, please visit** https://sansad.in/ls/questions/questions-and-answers .

12.04 hrs

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

(1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Powerloom Development and Export Promotion Council, Mumbai, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Powerloom Development and Export Promotion Council, Mumbai, for the year 2018-2019.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2198/17/20]

(3) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub- section (1) of Section 394 of the Companies Act, 2013:-

(i) Review by the Government of the working of the Jute Corporation of India Limited, Kolkata, for the year 2018-2019.

(ii) Annual Report of the Jute Corporation of India Limited, Kolkata, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2199/17/20]

(5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Jute Industries' Research Association, Kolkata, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Indian Jute Industries' Research Association, Kolkata, for the year 2018-2019.

(6) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (5) above.

Placed in Library, See No. LT 2200/17/20]

7. A copy of the Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Textiles for the year 2020-2021.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2201 /17/20]

8. A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (Hindi and English versions) between the Jute Corporation of India Limited and the Ministry of Textiles for the year 2019-2020.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2202/17/20]

9. A copy of Notification No. S.O.4578(E) (Hindi and English versions) published in Gazette of India dated 20th December, 2019, specifying by order the commodities or class of commodities or such percentage thereof to be packed for the purpose of its supply or distribution in such jute packaging material, after considering the recommendations of the Standing Advisory Committee under sub-section (2) of Section 3 of the Jute Packing Material (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act, 1987.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2203/17/20]

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): I beg to lay on the Table:-

(1) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the Prasar Bharati, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019, together with Audit Report thereon.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2204/17/20]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF AYURVEDA, YOGA AND NATUROPATHY, UNANI, SIDDHA AND HOMOEOPATHY (AYUSH) AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): I beg to lay on the Table:-

(1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Academy of Ayurveda, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Academy of Ayurveda, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2205/17/20]

(3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.

(ii) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019, together with Audit Report thereon.

(iii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.

(4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2206/17/20]

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (DR. HARSH VARDHAN): On behalf of Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, I beg to lay on the Table:-

(1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the All India Institute of Medical

Sciences, Jodhpur, for the year 2018-2019, along with Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Jodhpur, for the year 2018-2019.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2207/17/20]

(3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhubaneswar, for the year 2018-2019, along with Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhubaneswar, for the year 2018-2019.

(4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2208/17/20]

(5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Raipur, for the year 2018-2019, along with Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Raipur, for the year 2018-2019.

(6) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (5) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2209/17/20]

(7) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.

(ii) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute of

Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019, together with Audit Report thereon.

(iii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.

(8) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (7) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2210/17/20]

(9) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.

(ii) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019, together with Audit Report thereon.

(iii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of

the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, for the year 2018-2019.

(10) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (9) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2211/17/20]

(11) A copy of the Statement (Hindi and English versions) explaining reasons for not laying the Annual Report and Audited Accounts of the Central Mental Health Authority for the year 2018-2019 within the stipulated period of nine months after the close of the accounting year.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2212/17/20]

(12) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under Section 38 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940:-

(i) The Drugs and Cosmetics (Amendment) Rules, 2020 published in Notification No. G.S.R.101(E) in Gazette of India dated 11th February, 2020.

(ii) The Medical Devices (Amendment) Rules, 2020 published in Notification No. G.S.R.102(E) in Gazette of India dated 11th February, 2020.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 2213/17/20]

12.05 hrs

MESSAGES FROM RAJYA SABHA

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report the following messages received from the Secretary General of Rajya Sabha:-

(i) "In accordance with the provisions of rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha, at its sitting held on the 11th March, 2020, agreed to the following amendments made by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 11th February, 2020, in the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2019:-

ENACTING FORMULA

1. That at page 1, line 1, for the word "Seventieth', the word "Seventy-first" be substituted.

CLAUSE 1

2. That at page 1, line 3, ***for*** the figure "2019", the figure "2020" be ***substituted."***

(ii) "In accordance with the provisions of rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 12th March, 2020 agreed without any amendment to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2020 which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 6th March, 2020. "

(iii) "In accordance with the provisions of rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 12th March, 2020 agreed without any amendment to the Mineral Law (Amendment) Bill, 2020 which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 6th March, 2020. "

12.05 ½ hrs

COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

2nd Report

SHRI RAGHU RAMA KRISHNA RAJU (NARSAPURAM): I beg to present the Second Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation based on examination of statutory orders notified by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Human Resource Development under delegated legislation.

12.06 hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

11th to 13th Reports

SHRI P. C. GADDIGOUDAR (BAGALKOT): I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) of Standing Committee on Agriculture (2019-20):-

(1) 11th Report on 'Demands for Grants (2020-21)' of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying).

(2) 12th Report on 'Demands for Grants (2020-21)' of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Department of Fisheries).

(3) 13th Report on 'Demands for Grants (2020-21)' of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

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12.06 ½ hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

5th to 8th Reports

[Translation]

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Hon. Speaker Sir, I beg to present the following Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Information Technology (2019-20):-

1. Fifth Report on Demands for Grants (2020-21) relating to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
2. Sixth Report on Demands for Grants (2020-21) relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications).
3. Seventh Report on Demands for Grants (2020-21) relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts).
4. Eighth Report on Demands for Grants (2020-21) relating to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

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12.07 hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE

5th to 8th Reports

SHRI JUAL ORAM (SUNDARGARH): Hon. Speaker, I beg to present the following Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Defence:-

(1) Fifth Report of the Standing Committee on Defence (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2020-21 on 'General Defence Budget, Border Roads Organisation, Indian Coast Guard, Military Engineer Services, Directorate General Defence Estates, Defence Public Sector Undertakings, Canteen Stores Department, Welfare of Ex-Servicemen, Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme, Defence Pensions and Sainik Schools (Demand Nos. 18, 19, 20 and 21)'.

(2) Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Defence (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2020-21 on 'Army, Navy, Air Force and Joint Staff (Demand Nos. 19 and 20)'.

(3) Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on Defence (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry

of Defence for the year 2020-21 on ‘Capital Outlay on Defence Services, Procurement Policy, Defence Planning and Married Accommodation Project (Demand No. 20)'.

(4) Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Defence (17th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2020-21 on ‘Ordnance Factories, Defence Research and Development Organisation, Directorate General of Quality Assurance and National Cadet Corps (Demand Nos. 19 and 20)'.

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12.07 ½ hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

3rd Report

[English]

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY (PALI): I beg to present the Third Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on External Affairs (2019-20) on 'The Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian Bill, 2019' of the Ministry of External Affairs.

12.08 hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

3rd and 4th Reports

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (KOLKATA UTTAR): Hon. Speaker, I beg to present the following Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (2019-20):-

1. Third Report on 'Demands for Grants (2020-21)' of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Food and Public Distribution).

2. Fourth Report on Demands for Grants (2020-21) of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs).

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12.08 ½ hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR

5th to 7th Reports

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Hon. Speaker, I beg to present the following Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Labour:-

1. Fifth Report on 'Demands for Grants (2020-21)' of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
2. Sixth Report on 'Demands for Grants (2020-21)' of the Ministry of Textiles.
3. Seventh Report on 'Demands for Grants (2020-21)' of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

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12.09 hrs

STATEMENT CORRECTING REPLY TO UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3009 DATED 06.12.2019 REGARDING FAILURE OF IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME ALONGWITH REASONS FOR DELAY*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (DR. HARSH VARDHAN): On behalf of Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, I beg to make a Statement (i) correcting the reply given on 06.12.2019 to Unstarred Question No. 3009 (Hindi and English versions) by Shri Soyam Bapu Rao, Shri Selvam G. and Shri Dhanush M. Kumar, MPs regarding 'Failure of Immunization Programme' and (ii) giving reasons for delay in correcting the reply.

* Placed in Library, See No. LT 2214/17/20

Authenticated

Signed

(Ashwini Kumar Choubey)

Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

Department of Health & Family Welfare

STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE CORRECTING THE REPLY TO ANNEXURE I REFFERED IN PART (D) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3009 ANSWERED ON 06.12.2019 REGARDING "FAILURE OF IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME"

Question (Part of the information given in Annexure I referred in reply to Part (D) of the Question is corrected)	Previous Reply	Revised Reply
Annexure 1- State/UTs wise		

Full Immunization Coverage (%) for three years as per HMIS	S. no.	State / UTs Name	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
	1	Tamil Nadu	75.28	84.53	**148.71**
	2	Telangana	88.96	95.98	**54.20**

. no.	State/ UTs Name	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
1	Tamil Nadu	75.28	84.53	**84.95**
2	Telangana	88.96	95.98	**94.89**

AUTHENTICATED

SIGNED

(ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

MINSITER OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

REASON FOR DELAY IN CORRECTING THE REPLY TO LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3009 ANWERED ON 06TH DECEMBER 2019 REGARDING "FAILURE OF IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME"

The reply to Unstarred Question No. 3009 was laid in the Lok Sabha on 06th December, 2019. Few figures in Annexure 1 need to

corrected. The corrections are being made now as these inadvertent discrepancies came to our notice recently.

Inconvenience is regretted.

Revised Reply

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3009 TO BE ANSWERED ON 6th DECEMBER, 2019 FAILURE OF IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME

3009. SHRI SOYAM BAPU RAO:

SHRI G. SELVAM:

SHRI DHANUSH M. KUMAR:

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

(a) whether the schemes launched by the Government to promote immunization coverage in the country has failed to meet the objectives;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to overcome the difficulties in the implementation of the scheme;

(d) whether there is any improvement in the related indices like increase in immunization coverage or decrease in the incidence of diseases after the implementation of the scheme, if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise;

(e) whether the Government has assessed the progress achieved periodically under Universal Immunization Programme in the country and if so, the details thereof; and

(f) whether the Government is undertaking any other policies for promoting universal immunization, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) and (b): It is not correct that immunization coverage in the country has failed to meet the objectives. The immunization coverage in the country is steadily improving over the years. As per Health Management Information System (HMIS) 2018-19 Full Immunization coverage is 87.00 %.

(c): The immunization coverage is not uniform across the country. To rapidly build-up immunization coverage special immunization drives like Mission Indradhanush, Intensified Mission Indradhanush, Gram Swaraj Abhiyaan (GSA), Extended GSA has been conducted to reach out to left out children and hard to reach children living in remote & inaccessible geographical areas and pregnant mothers with vaccines.

(d): The full immunization coverage is improving over the years. The State/UTs wise full immunization coverage for last three years is given in **annexure 1**. The State/ UT wise details of vaccine preventable diseases burden are given at **annexure-II**.

(e): The Government has been regularly reviewing the immunization program through various mechanisms. Some of these are (i) Immunization programme review with State/UTs, (ii) reviewed and feedback of HMIS, concurrent monitoring data with the states/ UTs for corrective measure (iii) Regular video conference with state at all level to discuss program implementation gap (iv) Cold chain review (v) supportive supervision including concurrent monitoring feedback of the programme to State/UTs (iv) National Program Coordination Committee (NPCC) reviews etc.

(f) In addition to above Government of India is also undertaking awareness generation through electronic and print media through radio, television, posters, hoardings etc., strengthening inter personal communication & social mobilization by front line health workers like Auxillary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and other community workers for demand generation and empowering the community, regular utilizing of social media platforms like Twitter, WhatsApp’s etc.

Annexure-1

State/UTs wise Full immunization coverage (%) for three years as per HMIS

Sl. No.	State/UTs Name	Full immunization coverage (%)		
		2017- 18	2018- 19	2019-20
1	A & N Islands	77.22	84.98	74.79
2	Andhra Pradesh	99.36	101.43	96.58
3	Arunachal Pradesh	65.74	69.99	67.96

4	**Assam**	82.43	84.36	84.39
5	**Bihar**	91.80	77.36	95.58
6	**Chandigarh**	84.27	91.25	105.45
7	**Chhattisgarh**	85.56	92.20	88.61
8	**Dadra & Nagar Haveli**	91.42	76.24	94.67
9	**Daman & Diu**	79.24	66.43	62.69
10	**Delhi**	94.37	94.10	105.08
11	**Goa**	99.82	89.58	92.97

12	**Gujarat**	90.92	89.68	87.55
13	**Haryana**	88.28	86.76	94.63
14	**Himachal Pradesh**	78.20	89.21	91.56
15	**Jammu & Kashmir**	102.25	98.06	103.64
16	**Jharkhand**	98.47	80.68	95.82
17	**Karnataka**	92.88	93.64	92.06
18	**Kerala**	97.37	93.62	93.89

19	**Lakshadweep**	100.20	102.40	70.94
20	**Madhya Pradesh**	76.98	75.73	90.85
21	**Maharashtra**	95.38	94.78	101.70
22	**Manipur**	89.08	87.44	94.92
23	**Meghalaya**	77.29	57.58	83.56
24	**Mizoram**	89.75	87.26	89.07
25	**Nagaland**	53.50	46.99	71.27
26	**Odisha**	58.09	87.30	83.28

27	**Puducherry**	69.18	64.90	59.88
28	**Punjab**	90.98	85.76	97.10
29	**Rajasthan**	80.11	78.81	73.21
30	**Sikkim**	68.13	69.35	53.60
31	**Tamil Nadu**	75.28	84.53	84.95
32	**Telangana**	88.96	95.98	94.89
33	**Tripura**	79.78	86.63	89.18
34	**Uttar Pradesh**	83.43	88.75	91.62

35	**Uttarakhand**	88.23	102.78	98.75
36	**West Bengal**	95.69	95.11	97.83
	All India	**86.71**	**87.00**	**91.63**

Data source: HMIS: Status as On: 29 Nov 2019

Annexure 2

STATE/UT WISE CASES DUE TO VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES - 2017-18.

S.	State/UT	Neonatal	Diphtheria	Pertussis	Measles	Japanese

no		Tetanus								Encephalitis	
		2017	2018 (P)	2017	2018 (P)	2017	2018 (P)	2017	2018 (P)	2017	2018 (P)
1	Andhra Pradesh	14	2	6	67	1	187	65	184	1	0
2	Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	15	34	318	35	5	0
3	Assam	0	0	3162	9083	4142	4689	1040	2361	604	509
4	Bihar	69	5	39	14	207	123	211	500	74	70
5	Chhattisgarh	0	8	1	0	724	852	15	10	0	0

6	**Goa**	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	15	0	3
7	**Gujarat**	0	0	28	5	7	4	1312	869	0	0
8	**Haryana**	2	0	10	100	117	164	212	352	4	0
9	**Himachal Pradesh**	0	0	0	0	1	0	255	26	0	0
10	**Jammu Div.**	0	0	0	0	3	0	30	110	0	0
	Kashmir Div.	0	0	0	0	25	102	1488	2039		
11	**Jharkhand**	102	2	20	3	4995	3372	520	452	29	66

12	**Karnataka**	1	2	168	63	621	1368	426	246	26	35
13	**Kerala**	0	1	126	47	60	73	584	306	1	5
14	**Madhya Pradesh**	30	14	43	72	6219	1646	664	433	0	0
15	**Maharashtra**	6	9	141	32	724	332	2511	1963	27	6
16	**Manipur**	0	0	0	28	7	0	409	483	186	57
17	**Meghalaya**	28	59	5	2	1346	779	311	219	48	90

18	**Mizoram**	0	0	0	2	0	5	286	197	0	0
19	**Nagaland**	0	0	0	0	2	13	83	597	10	1
20	**Odisha**	38	1	0	1	638	559	883	199	79	143
21	**Punjab**	0	0	0	84	0	0	0	3	1	0
22	**Rajasthan**	20	32	435	583	800	745	729	1067	0	0
23	**Sikkim**	0	0	0	0	10	0	248	69	0	0
24	**Tamil Nadu**	0	0	0	4	0	0	135	39	127	147
25	**Telangana**	0	25	17	89	802	594	315	0	11	20

26	**Tripura**	0	0	6	16	12	3	130	285	90	59
27	**Uttarakhand**	0	0	0	28	269	295	201	156	0	0
28	**Uttar Pradesh**	14	2	22	59	1068	982	803	1349	693	323
29	**West Bengal**	9	18	611	351	1029	895	3910	4886	165	140
30	**A & N Islands**	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	15	0	0
31	**Chandigarh**	0	1	20	30	26	54	22	47	0	0

32	**D & N Haveli**	1	0	0	0	914	76	46	10	0	0
33	**Daman & Diu**	0	0	0	0	1	18	4	1	0	0
34	**Delhi**	3	0	560	957	2	42	422	1371	0	0
35	**Lakshadweep**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
36	**Puducherry**	0	0	1	0	0	0	15	1	0	0
	India	**337**	**181**	**5421**	**1720**	**4787**	**8006**	**8618**	**0895**	**2181**	**1674**

12.09 ½ hrs

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL): With your permission, Sir, I rise to announce that Government Business during the week commencing Monday, the 16th of March, 2020 will consist of:-

1. Consideration of any items of Government Business carried over from today's order paper:- [it contains (i) Further discussion and voting for Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Railways for 2020-21 (ii) Discussion and voting on Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for 2020-21; (iii) Discussion and voting on Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Tourism for 2020-21; (iv) Discussion and voting on Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for 2020-21; (v) Discussion and voting on Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of External Affairs for 2020-21 (vi) Discussion and voting on Demands for Grants under the

control of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for 2020-21; and (vii) Consideration and passing of the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020.]

2. Introduction, consideration and passing of the Appropriation Bills relating to:-

(i) Demands for Grants for 2020-21.

(ii) Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2019-20.

3. Guillotining of outstanding Demands for Grants in respect of Union Budget for 2020-21.

4. Combined discussion and voting on the following Grants:-

(i) Supplementary Demands for Grants (State of Jammu & Kashmir) for the financial year 2019-20 from 1st April 2019 to 30th October 2019.

(ii) Demands for Grants (Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir) for the financial year 2019-20 from 31st October 2019 to 31st March 2020.

(iii) Demands for Grants (Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir) for the financial year 2020-21 from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

(iv) Demands for Grants (Union Territory of Ladakh) for the financial year 2019-20 from 31st October 2019 to 31st March 2020.

5. Consideration and passing of the Finance Bill, 2020.

6. Consideration of passing of the following Bills:-

(i) The Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Bill, 2020.

(ii) The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

(iii) The Indian Institutes of Information Technology Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

(iv) The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

7. and passing of the following Bills after they are passed by Rajya Sabha:-

(i) The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill, 2019.

(ii) The National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill, 2019.

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Hon. Speaker, Sir, my humble submission is that the Private Members' Business is the right of the Members. …*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, all the issues that you are raising will be discussed in the Business Advisory Committee.

. . . (*(Interruptions)*

DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY: (GODDA): Sir, I have given notice of a privilege motion. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: I will look into it. I will take it up on Monday.

12.12 hrs

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, permission has been granted to raise matters under Rule 377 today. Hon. Members may personally hand over the text of the matter at the Table of the House.

(i) Need to include certain castes of Bihar in the list of Scheduled Tribes

SHRIMATI RAMA DEVI (SHEOHAR): I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the Kahar, Chandravanshi, Bari, Mallah, Nishad communities and their sub-castes in the State of Bihar. We all know that the Mallah and Nishad are among the most ancient communities, whose mention is found even in ancient religious texts such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Since ancient times, this community has been dependent on water, forests and land, and has traditionally been engaged in boating and fishing.Their population in Bihar is around 1.5 crore.

There are nearly 20 sub-castes within the Nishad and Mallah communities. In view of the social, economic, political and educational backwardness of these communities, the Government

* Treated as laid on the Table.

of Bihar had, as early as June 2018, recommended to the Union Government the inclusion of the Kahar, Chandravanshi, Bari, Mallah, Nishad and their sub-castes namely Bind, Beldar, Chai, Tiyar, Khulwat, Surahiya, Godhi, Vanpar, Kevat and Noniya in the list of Scheduled Tribes. This recommendation was submitted along with the report after the ethnographic study sought by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, from the State Government. However, due to the absence of any concrete action so far, a sense of disappointment is prevailing among the Kahar, Chandravanshi, Bari, Mallah, Nishad communities and their sub-castes in Bihar.

Therefore, I request the Government to ensure that the above-mentioned Kahar, Chandravanshi, Bari, Mallah, Nishad communities and their sub-castes namely Bind, Beldar, Chai, Tiyar, Khulwat, Surahiya, Godhi, Vanpar, Kevat and Noniya are included in the category of Scheduled Tribes in the State of Bihar, so that these sub-castes, which have remained economically, socially and educationally backward for years, may be uplifted.

(ii) Regarding allocation of more IPS officers to Odisha

[English]

SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO (BOLANGIR): The Indian Police Service (IPS) cadre strength of Odisha is 195 posts. Out of these, 136 posts are meant for direct recruitment (DR), and 59 posts are under promotional quota, to be taken from the State Police Service. Out of the 136 posts meant for DR, only 117 officers are currently in position, leaving a shortfall of 19 officers. All 59 posts under the promotional quota are also vacant. Of the 117 DR posts, only 79 officers are serving in the state, while the rest are on deputation to other departments. Fifteen districts of Odisha are affected by Left-wing extremism. Keeping in view the increase in naxal incidents in the state, it is imperative to post young and energetic officers in the rank of Superintendent of Police to combat this problem.

Hence, I request the Minister of Home Affairs to consider allocating more IPS officers to Odisha for the next 5-6 years.

(iii) Need to provide the benefits of Government Welfare Schemes to widowed, deserted, orphaned, and destitute women in the country

[Translation]

SHRI CHUNNI LAL SAHU (MAHASAMUND): I would like to apprise the Government that provisions exist in the country for providing pension, shelter and support to widowed, destitute, neglected and abandoned women. However, if their names do not figure in the BPL survey lists as per the 2002 and 2011 Census, they are deprived of all Government welfare schemes. If they have children, their lives become even more difficult. From the perspective of social justice, it is not only essential but also appropriate that such widowed and abandoned women receive the benefits of welfare schemes.

I therefore request that, by conducting a survey of young, destitute and poor widowed or abandoned women across the country, the mandatory requirement of inclusion in the BPL list may be suitably amended so as to extend the benefits of Government schemes to them.

(iv) Need to undertake a census of OBC castes in Census 2021

SHRI RAMDAS TADAS (WARDHA): I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Home Minister to an extremely important matter and respectfully submit that, keeping in view the interests of the OBC category, a caste-based enumeration should be conducted in the proposed Census of 2021 to enumerate all castes and sub-castes falling under the OBC category.

Such a step would enable the creation of an important official Government record through the enumeration of citizens belonging to the OBC category, and this data will certainly be beneficial to us in the times to come.

(v) Need to develop Jammu as a Smart City

JUGAL KISHORE SHARMA (JAMMU): I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to my Parliamentary Constituency of Jammu. Although a list of works has been prepared for developing Jammu as a Smart City, no work has commenced so far. This includes development along both banks of the Tawi River and their development on the lines of the Sabarmati River. Jammu Lake is also being developed as part of Jammu Darshan, which will attract visiting tourists and also enhance business opportunities for the people of Jammu. I request the Hon. Minister to kindly accord special attention to the development of Jammu as a Smart City and to ensure that this project is completed at the earliest.

(vi) Regarding laying of the Deoghar-Pirpainti railway line

[English]

DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY (GODDA): I have demanded, in my capacity as the Godda Lok Sabha MP, that the crucial Deoghar-Pirpainti via Godda railway line be constructed under the new 50-50 cost-sharing arrangement. The State Government agreed and wrote to the Railway Board, stating its intention to contribute 50% of the total cost.

In February 2014, the CCEA cleared this 127-km Deoghar-Pirpainti via Godda rail project. Land acquisition has since started. However, in 2017, the Coal Ministry raised an objection, claiming it had been allotted a coal block on the route between Godda and Pirpainti. This was surprising, as the Coal Ministry had previously provided a NoC, allowing land acquisition to proceed. The Godda to Mahagama 32-km land acquisition process is complete, and the Railways have awarded the contract to lay the railway line.

However, the 30-km section between Mahagama and Pirpainti is stuck due to the coal companies' last-minute objections. As a result, the State Government is unwilling to fund the project since the new alignment will pass through Bihar. The people of the region

have been suffering for the last 72 years, and this new problem has dashed their hopes.

It is, therefore, requested:

1. The objections of Coal India should be overruled, and the original alignment of the proposed railway line should be maintained.

2. NTPC should allow the use of its existing line to save costs and avoid delays.

Anything less is likely to compel the people of the region to protest and shut down coal mining and its transportation to NTPC. I request your intervention at the earliest to resolve this issue, which is hindering the development of the region.

(vii) Need To Set Up Skill Development Centres At Block And Panchayat Levels In Dhar Parliamentary Constituency, Madhya Pradesh

[Translation]

SHRI CHHATAR SINGH DARBAR (DHAR): Today, under the leadership of the country's illustrious Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji, India is concerned about the development of those standing at the lowest economic rung. As a result, every individual in society is able to improve his or her standard of living by availing the benefits of the Government's progressive schemes and is aspiring towards a brighter future. The principal objective of the Government is to make every youth skilled and thereby self-reliant. In Madhya Pradesh, my Parliamentary Constituency of Dhar is rich in natural resources. The people of this region are engaged not only in agriculture but also in animal husbandry.

I request the Government to establish skill development centres at the block and panchayat levels to make the youth of this region self-reliant, so that rural youth may acquire skills in accordance with their natural aptitude and contribute meaningfully to the development of the nation.

(viii) Regarding transfer of LPG gas connections in Uttarakhand

SHRI TIRATH SINGH RAWAT (GARHWAL): In Devbhoomi Uttarakhand, small LPG distributor agencies are suffering financial losses due to the non-transfer of gas connections, as per rules, from large agencies to smaller ones, including distributors operating in remote and rural areas.

I request the government to take necessary steps in this regard soon.

(ix) Need to check flood and land erosion caused by Ganga and Phulhar rivers in Maldaha Uttar Parliamentary Constituency, West Bengal

SHRI KHAGEN MURMU (MALDAHA UTTAR): I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the recurring floods and river erosion in my Parliamentary Constituency of Maldaha Uttar in West Bengal. A major portion of my constituency is situated along the banks of the Ganga and the Fulhar rivers. Due to the annual floods and erosion, numerous villages are being engulfed by the rivers. Every year, nearly 30 square kilometres of land are lost to erosion by the Ganga and the Fulhar, resulting in thousands of people being rendered homeless and forced to live under the open sky. Due to the erosion of cultivable land, people are facing severe unemployment and hunger.

I request the Government to formulate a permanent action plan to prevent floods and erosion caused by the Ganga and the Fulhar rivers and to resolve this problem. I also urge that arrangements be made for the rehabilitation and employment of those who have been forced onto the streets due to erosion, and that necessary directions be issued for the assessment of losses and for providing compensation to those affected by river erosion.

(x) Regarding alleged irregularities in payment of compensation to farmers under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana in Bhiwani-Mahendragarh parliamentary constituency, Haryana

SHRI DHARAMVIR SINGH (BHIWANI-MAHENDRAGARH): The farmers of my Parliamentary Constituency of Bhiwani–Mahendragarh in Haryana are constantly affected by natural calamities, sometimes due to excessive rainfall and at other times due to severe hailstorms. This time as well, heavy hailstorms have occurred twice within a month, resulting in the destruction of most of the crops. I request both the Central and State Governments to jointly extend assistance to the annadata. The Government should conduct a special girdawari of the crops and make arrangements for compensation at the earliest. Last year, under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, farmers of nearly 400 villages in my Parliamentary Constituency received a refund of the premium amount deposited by them after six months from banks and insurance companies, instead of compensation for the damaged crops. Such irregularities were faced by farmers across the country. Therefore, I humbly request that, in order to prevent such irregularities with farmers, the Sarv Gramin Bank in Haryana be

removed from the role of Lead Bank and the responsibility of Lead Bank be entrusted to another bank.

(xi) Need to establish a Medical College in the rural area of Bardoli Parliamentary Constituency, Gujarat

SHRI PRABHUBHAI NAGARBHAI VASAVA (BARDOLI): My Parliamentary Constituency of Bardoli, in Surat district of Gujarat, is a tribal-dominated region. The Bardoli Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency comprises the districts of Surat and Tapi. There is an urgent need for a major hospital to provide adequate healthcare facilities in this region. Even where Government hospitals exist, timely access to basic healthcare services is delayed due to the population load. Surat district is geographically very large. There has been a long-standing demand from the general public of my Parliamentary Constituency for the establishment of a medical college in the Bardoli Parliamentary Constituency. Rural residents are compelled to travel 60 to 70 kilometres to reach urban hospitals and medical colleges.

I therefore request the Hon. Health Minister to kindly take steps to establish a medical college in the rural area of Mandvi within the Bardoli Parliamentary Constituency.

(xii) Regarding expeditious implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in Jabalpur Parliamentary Constituency, Madhya Pradesh

SHRI RAKESH SINGH (JABALPUR): I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the implementation of works under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana in my Parliamentary Constituency of Jabalpur.

The Hon. Prime Minister of the country, Shri Narendra Modi ji, launched the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) to ensure that the poor rural population of the country is able to live with dignity under a permanent roof, with access to a toilet, electricity and clean drinking water, as part of their fundamental right to a dignified life. However, the Government of Madhya Pradesh and its officials are not implementing this scheme in a proper and time-bound manner.

Only one month remains before the end of the financial year 2019–20, yet the district administration of Jabalpur has not even achieved half of the target assigned under the PM Awas Yojana. During the current financial year, the district was given a target of constructing 8,000 houses, against which only 1,266 houses have been completed so far. This issue was discussed in the “DISHA” meeting and instructions were given to expedite the work, but the

Government of Madhya Pradesh has not taken the necessary and appropriate steps.

I would urge the Hon. Minister for Rural Development to issue directions to the State Government so that the pace of work under the housing scheme is accelerated and houses are provided to the poor rural population through this scheme.

(xiii) Regarding expeditious disposal of petitions on Citizen Amendment Act by Supreme Court

SHRI VIVEK NARAYAN SHEJWALKAR (GWALIOR): The entire nation has been deeply anguished by the widespread incidents of violence and arson that occurred in several areas of the national capital, Delhi, in recent days. The occurrence of these incidents at a time when the President of the United States of America, Shri Donald Trump, was visiting the capital appears to be a conspiracy orchestrated under a well-thought-out strategy. The recovery of petrol, petrol bombs and pouches of acid from the houses and hideouts of miscreants clearly indicates that preparations had been made well in advance. It is also extremely unfortunate that our intelligence and security apparatus remained unaware of these developments.

Since the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), forces seeking to divide the nation have begun the deliberate act of poisoning the minds of our Muslim brothers and sisters. It is deeply unfortunate that, merely to oppose Prime Minister Modi ji, certain so-called intellectuals and self-proclaimed progressive elements, despite knowing the truth about the CAA, have spread blatant falsehoods and fuelled unrest.

This law does not concern any citizen of the country, nor does it take away the rights of any citizen. It is a law intended to grant citizenship to persecuted minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is not a law that terminates the citizenship of any Indian citizen. Despite this, agitations are being organised at various places on the basis of a non-issue, which is beyond comprehension. It is also extremely unfortunate that the media, instead of informing the people about the provisions of the CAA, confined the entire discourse to protests, hate speeches and mutual allegations and counter-allegations. Numerous petitions have been filed against the CAA in the Hon. Supreme Court. Due to the delay in their expeditious disposal, those indulging in provocative actions and organising protests such as road blockades by placing women and children at the forefront are, regrettably, being encouraged.

C.A.A. is not unconstitutional. Its implementation neither violates any provision of the Constitution nor does it interfere in any manner with the basic structure of the Constitution. It would be in the national interest if this fact is established at the earliest by the judiciary. The Government should, after due consultation with legal experts, take the necessary steps in this regard at the earliest. Only

then will this issue be resolved, leading to the establishment of peace, unity and harmony in the country.

(xiv) Need to set up Oxygen Parks in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh under AMRUT Scheme

SHRI RAJENDRA AGRAWAL (MEERUT): With a view to eliminating air pollution in urban areas, a decision has been taken under the AMRUT scheme to establish Oxygen Parks. These Oxygen Parks, which are to be set up in densely populated areas, will have plantation of several oxygen-emitting plants such as neem, banyan, aloe vera, ram tulsi and tulsi. These parks will not only facilitate the circulation of fresh air in cities but will also provide relief from increasing pollution. The cost of establishing one park is approximately Rs. 20 lakh.

In this context, a total of 15 Oxygen Parks are to be established in Meerut, but the construction work has not yet commenced. I request the Government to expedite the construction of these Oxygen Parks so that people may receive clean and cool air.

(xv) Need to accelerate the pace of construction of Bihta-Aurangabad railway line in Bihar

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH (AURANGABAD): Under the East Central Railway, the Bihta–Aurangabad new railway line project has already been sanctioned. The project was scheduled to be completed in 2011–12; however, it remains pending to date. Due to the delay in its implementation, the estimated cost has escalated from Rs. 326 crore to Rs. 2,800 crore. I have raised this matter several times earlier in this House, yet the work on the project continues to be stalled. I demand that the Government implement this project under the Connecting India scheme and extend the railway line from Aurangabad via Amba, Deo, Dumaria and Imamganj up to Chatra and Hazaribagh. This will provide improved rail connectivity to half a dozen Left Wing Extremism-affected and aspirational districts of the States of Bihar and Jharkhand. Keeping in view the needs of the growing population in these backward regions and in order to accelerate the pace of development, I urge the Government to complete this project at the earliest.

(xvi)Need to provide stoppage of Gorakhpur-Gomatinagar Express (train no. 15009/10) at Brijmanganj railway station in Maharajganj district, Uttar Pradesh

SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY (MAHARAJGANJ): Brijmanganj town in my Parliamentary Constituency of Maharajganj is quite large. It has a police station, block headquarters, telephone office, police outpost, banks, and several Government and non-Government institutions as well as schools. A large number of people from this area travel by train on a daily basis. The general public has demanded that Train No. 15009/15010, Gorakhpur–Gomti Nagar Express, be provided with a stoppage at Brijmanganj Railway Station. This train currently has stoppages at Anand Nagar and Uska Bazar Railway Stations. As there is dense forest between Anand Nagar and Brijmanganj, and between Brijmanganj and Uska Bazar, it is not possible to reach Anand Nagar or Uska Bazar at night to board this train. Moreover, there is no proper road transport facility available during the night.

I request you to order that, in the public interest, train number 15009/15010 Gorakhpur-Gomti Nagar Express should be stopped at Brijmanganj railway station.

(xvii) Regarding inclusion of houses in Coastal Zone Regulation notification in Kerala

[English]

SHRI HIBI EDEN (ERNAKULAM): A large number of houses have been found included in the coastal zone regulation notification, spanning 10 districts and majority of them belong to fishermen community and financially backward. There are concerns raised regarding the lack of notification given to the residents prior to finalization of notification, leading to many being uniformed later on about inclusion of their homes in the list. There are disturbing reports that the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority might miss the March 23 deadline set forth by the Supreme Court and the socio-economic ramifications will be disastrous. By keeping in view, the social cost and agony of common people, I urge the Government that relief be granted to houses by considering the socio economic status of house owners such as BPL, SC/ST/OBC, Fishermen, widows , Ex-servicemen, physically challenged and they be exempted from the ambit of the existing legislation as they are unable to afford another dwelling.

(xviii) Regarding proposed changes in the labour law and labour code

SHRI K. MURALEEDHARAN (VADAKARA): I would like to raise a matter regarding the proposed changes to be implemented by the Union Government in the labour law and labour code in the country. Apart from the negative implications for the working class in the country as whole, the proposed changes will also have specific implications for the journalists employed in the Media industry. The proposed changes will make the provisions of working journalist act infructuous and redundant by reducing the journalist community to the mercy of management thereby affecting the job security and the remuneration of journalists. The changes will serve a death blow to freedom of press and media in the country. I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that the Union Government has not taken any initiative to constitute Wage Board for the Journalists and other workers employed in the Media Industry in the past 10 years. It is mandatory on the part of the government to constitute a Wage Board every five years for fixing the wages and working conditions of the journalists and other employees in the media industry. I, therefore, request the Government to review the proposed changes in acts concerning journalist and also take necessary steps for announcement of new Wage Board.

(xix) Regarding the plight of farmers of Tamil Nadu

SHRI GAUTHAM SIGAMANI PON (KALLAKURICHI): The farmers of Tamil Nadu are in extreme distress and more so is the case of sugarcane farmers. Having supplied their produce to the mills, the farmers necessarily need to get their dues without any delay. But the plight of sugarcane farmers is absolutely woeful. The undue delay on the part of sugar mills is unwarranted and puts the already disadvantaged farmers to undue distress.

Vilupuram district has seven sugar mills, of them three are co-operative sugars Mills and the other four are Private Sector companies.

The undisbursed amounts kept pending by these sugar units as detailed below:

1. Kallakurichi Co Operative sugar mills, Moongilthuraipattu (4.8 crores)
2. Gomuki Co Operative sugar mills; Kacharapalayam (No dues)
3. Sengalvarayan Co-Operative sugar mills- Sevalai (3.4 crores)
4. Tharani Sugar Mills, Thyagathurugam (23.8 crores approximately)
5. Raja Shri Sugar Mills, Mundiampakkam (43.7 crores)
6. Raja Shri Sugar Mills- Semmedu (4.6 crores)

7. Pannari Amman Sugar Mills, Venkur, Thirukovilur.

The total pending amounts kept by Sugar Mills in Vilupuram district is 80.3 crores approximately.

I request the Hon'ble Minister to intervene and direct the mills to pay the dues in time and save them from hardship.

(xx) Regarding problems being faced by orphaned in the country

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA VISWANATH (KAKINADA): According to UNICEF, there are about 14.3% or 21 crore orphaned children across the globe. India has an estimated 2.57 crore orphaned children aged 0-17 years as in 2007. Though a significant number of orphaned children are being adopted, the number of children becoming orphan is far greater than their adoption.

The Union Government should create clear "Definition for Orphans" through Constitutional Act. For an Indian citizen, the government has introduced so many cards like pan card, Aadhar card, Voter card etc. But none for orphans. To get admission in the school one needs Birth certificate, Caste certificate, to receive government entitlements they need ration card, income certificate and residential certificate for address proof. But what can an orphan submit to get the above certificates? Most of the orphans suffer a host of physical, sociological and psychological problems including lack of nutrition, education, and abuse. Every Orphan from broken heart is asking their identity, in details like parentage, date of birth, caste, religion etc.

We request the Government to take it as an important and urgent matter and action to be taken in defining the orphan and

policies to be enacted to address the above mentioned genuine problems.

(xxi) Regarding setting up of village secretariats in Andhra Pradesh

SHRI LAVU SRIKRISHNA DEVARAYALU (NARASARAOPET): Mahatma Gandhi firmly believed that the country would perish if development eludes villages. And, taking cue from this, AP CM has opened a new chapter in public administration by starting village secretariats on 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

By bringing governance and nearly 500 service delivery mechanism closer to the doorsteps of villagers, Village Secretariat works as bridge between Government and the people. One Secretariat has been set up in every village having population of 2,000 or more and in Wards having a population of 5,000 or more. It is expected to create around 5.6 lakh new jobs. Secondly, it strengthens the Panchayati Raj system and strengthens the decentralized federal system. It gives people the chance to directly participate in the development of their villages and therefore enhances participative democracy. Thirdly, the Village Secretariats will also wipe out corruption for getting ration card or pension or to avail any welfare scheme.

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12.12 hrs

UNION BUDGET -2020-2021

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS, 2020-2021

Ministry of Railways- Contd...

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, the discussion on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Railways continued till 12 midnight yesterday. Till the Hon. Minister gives his reply, if you so desire, you may place your demands in writing on the Table of the House.

Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

[English]

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY (BAHARAMPUR): Sir, whenever we dwell on the subject of Indian Railways, we tend to get a bit nostalgic because we have witnessed the huge fanfare and brilliance when the Railway Budget used to be presented in this House.

[Translation]

Sir, yesterday the House continued its discussion on railways till 12 midnight. The Hon. Speaker did the right thing, because in order to save the Railways from an complicated situation, it was

necessary to deliberate till twelve. Even then, it remains uncertain whether the Railways will actually be saved or not. [English] Gone are those halcyon days of the Railways. The Railways now cast a lurid eye on the entire economic spectrum of our country. However, the fact is that the Railways are still recognized as the most fundamental fulcrum, despite suffering from various lacunae, deficiencies, non-performances, and other ailments over the years, which the Minister is well aware of.

May I ask a question to the Hon. Railway Minister? Do you think that after the amalgamation of the Railway Budget with the General Budget, the Railways have been able to yield any tangible or perceptible outcome? It is because the separation convention was abolished by you. I would like to know, after the end of the separation convention, whether the Railways have been able to yield any tangible or perceptible outcome. In spite of your highfalutin promises, the Railways have failed to earn adequate revenue. In the freight sector, too, it has been registering a slowdown.

You do not have internal surplus. Over the years, budgetary support has remained consistent, and you have been resorting to borrowings from the market. Extra-budgetary borrowings have become the order of the day. Without the requisite financial sinews, how would you be able to run this behemoth called Railways?

12.16 hrs (Shri Rajendra Agrawal *in the Chair*)

In the absence of a separate Railway Budget, we have been failed, and people of our country are not being able to know the nitty-gritty of your finances. Earlier, the Indian Railways used to brainstorm in order to prepare a sound and detailed Budget, clearly explaining the features like total Budget outlay, revenue receipt and capital expenditure. Now, people do not know anything about it. So, there is a severe transparency lacuna being observed.

Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Railway Minister. In so far as net revenue is concerned, as noted by the Standing Committee on Railways, there has been a drastic reduction since 2015-16. Between 2015-16 and 2019-20, there was a decline of 80 per cent in the net revenue. The net revenue of Indian Railways in the year 2015-16 as per the Budget Estimate was Rs. 25,076 crore. In the RE, it came down to Rs. 19,897 crore. In the actuals, it was Rs. 19,228.48 crore. Now, in the year 2018-19, the Budget Estimate was of Rs. 12,990 crore. The Revised Estimate was of Rs. 6,014 crore, but the actuals came down to Rs. 3773.86 crore. So, there is a continuous decline in the net revenue of your Department.

In the year 2018-19, you have revised your target for the construction new rail lines to 1,000 kilometres, but the achievement is 479 kilometres. In the year 2019-20, your target for new lines was 500 kilometres which was revised to 300 kilometres and the achievement up to January, 2020 is only 278 kilometres.

So far as gauge conversion is concerned, in the year 2018-19, the target was of 1,000 kilometres and the achievement was of 597 kilometres. In the Budget of 2019-20, the target was fixed at 600 kilometres which was revised to 400 kilometres and the actual achievement up to January, 2020 is 345 kilometres.

The same scenario is repeating in the electrification project also. In the year 2018-19, the target was revised to 6,000 kilometres while the achievement was 5,279 kilometres. Again, in the year 2019-20, the target was fixed at 7,000 kilometres which was revised to 6,000 kilometres and the achievement up to January, 2020 is 2,881 kilometres.

So, this is the record of your performance. You must certainly acknowledge your dismal performance in spite of rosy picture being painted by you. You have raised the fare also. We have not objected that so much. Still India performs poorly in global rankings on Railways. It was ranked 28th in 2019 on quality of Railway

infrastructure as part of the Global Competitive Index. I think this data must be at your disposal.

Insofar as bullet train is concerned, I would like to know what is its fate. What is the fate of bullet train? The deadline that was fixed was 2022. I would like to know whether it would be possible to complete the work by 2022. The reason why I am asking this is eloquent and obvious. Till now only about 39 per cent of the total required land has been acquired. Further, farmers are opposing the project as well as acquisition of their land. Nearly 6,900 farmers are impacted by it and 60 per cent of them have already raised objection to the acquisition process. So, what is the fate of bullet train, which is Narendra Modi ji's dream project? You must address that in your reply.

You have failed to implement your earlier Budget announcements. I would like to enumerate them one after another.

12.22 hrs (Hon. Speaker *in the Chair*)

In the 2017-18 Budget speech, you promised that a new Metro Rail Act would be enacted by rationalising the existing laws. It has not been delivered. In the 2015-16 Budget, it was promised that in the next five years, your priority would be to significantly improve the capacity of the existing high-density network. It was also

promised that the average speed of the trains would be increased and that trains would become more punctual. In 2018-19, the punctuality rate reduced to 68.91 percent as against 71.55 percent in 2017-18 and 76.67 percent in 2016-17, according to Railway's data. This is not data mined by us.

In 2017-18, it was promised that it would be your continuous endeavour to improve the operating ratio of the Railways and that tariffs would be fixed considering the quality of service, the cost, the social obligation, and competition from other forms of transport. But what is the actual position prevailing now? The Indian Railways reported a drop in profitability during the first five years of the Modi Government at the Centre. Between 2014 and 2019, Railways' profitability decreased by 7.8 percent.

During the financial year 2017-18, the Indian Railways reported its worst-ever operating ratio of 98.40, the highest since 2000-01, when it was 98.30.

In your manifesto, it was declared that modernisation and upgradation would be based on national development rather than political expediency. But what is the status? The Railways have performed poorly under the BJP Government, with falling punctuality rates, falling revenues, and a high operating ratio. There

are few signs of improvement, with many of the required reforms pushed into the slow lane.

You also promised in your manifesto that you would launch the diamond quadrilateral project for a high-speed train network. But so far, only the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Train has been announced. Feasibility studies have been going on for years for the remaining projects, and the answer is awaited. However, do not try to mislead the House about this Government's performance.

I am drawing your attention to these issues for the betterment of the Railways. Please do not take it otherwise. You are talking about various kinds of reforms. [Translation] Instead of reforms, deforms are increasingly taking place in the Railways. Leave aside reforms; the Railways are steadily deteriorating. I would like to offer you a suggestion. You speak of privatisation. Yesterday, the entire House discussed this issue, and the whole House is opposed to privatisation. When you speak of privatisation, why do you not convene all the States of India and tell them to initiate projects of their choice? We are prepared to relinquish our share of the Railways. Why can you not do that? Under GST, there is State GST, Central GST, and Integrated GST. Similarly, such a model can be adopted for the Railways as well. We have so many States in India. Why do you not give these States an opportunity to take

responsibility for the Railways instead of privatising them, and allow them to run trains according to their own requirements? They can operate them as they deem fit. Why are you not doing this?

Reform means fresh thinking; reform means an innovative approach. If you hand this over to private entities, there will be no regulator over them. Suppose you privatise the Railways; it would mean that private organisations would begin competing with Indian Railways. On one hand, they would act as judges, and on the other, as competitors.

So far as organisational change is concerned, Shri Goyal, I wish to draw your attention to this. We too desire the progress of Indian Railways, and that is why we consider it appropriate to offer this advice.

The complete fabric of railway working has been destroyed in the name of amalgamation of all technical and non-technical services by creating Indian Railway Managerial Service (IRMS) and corporatisation of the Railway Board, resulting in the reduction of a number of Board Members, officers and railwaymen have got demotivated and disheartened, and their morale is very low which will largely affect camaraderie and performance, in turn.

As a backdrop to this development, Railways have withdrawn their indent on UPSC for recruitment in 2020. You are withdrawing your indent from the UPSC. Indian Railway Service for Engineers, Indian Railway Service for Electrical Engineers, Indian Railway Service for Mechanical Engineers, Indian Railway Service for Signal and Telecommunication Engineers, Indian Railway Stores Service, Indian Railway Civil Service, Indian Railway Traffic Service, Indian Railway Personnel Service, and Indian Railway Accounts Service. Why are you withdrawing all indents from there? [Translation] This will cause damage to the Railways in the days to come, because you cannot run the Railways alone. The Railways has nearly 1.5 million employees. If these employees are not properly motivated, you will not be able to achieve the outcomes you expect from the Railways. When we talk about capacity being constrained by funding, your existing route operating at full capacity has led to steadily losing passenger traffic to other modes of transport. Your modal share is continuously declining. What are you planning to do to increase the modal share?

Not a single word has been stated here regarding the amenities of railway employees. You have no clear thinking on demand and supply in the Railways. What is the annual demand of Indian Railways and what is the supply? If this aspect is examined,

startling figures will emerge. Every month, more than eight lakh people are unable to obtain railway tickets. This clearly indicates a huge gap between demand and supply. For India, the Railways is essentially a service sector. If you are unable to provide the service, you must identify the reasons for this failure. What is your roadmap to address these reasons? Please place it before this House and inform the people of India.

Railways earned over Rs 4,684 crore from the cancellation fees of confirmed tickets. When confirmed tickets are cancelled, it results in earnings of Rs. 4,684 crore for you. When waitlisted tickets are cancelled, you earn revenue of Rs. 4,335 crore from them. You may yourself examine these anomalies. Sir, I wish to raise one crucial issue. I am about to conclude. In the Indian Railways system, there exists an appropriation to the Depreciation Reserve Fund. Kindly inform the House about the present condition of this Fund. You are required to do so [English] because, in the last few years, the appropriation to the Depreciation Reserve Fund (DRF) has decreased significantly. In 2014-2015, the appropriation to the DRF was Rs 7,775 crore. By 2018-2019, this had reduced to only Rs 300 crore. Under-provisioning for the DRF has been observed as one of the reasons behind the decline in track renewals and procurement of wagons and coaches.

The Standing Committee also observed that appropriations to the DRF are obtained as a residual after payment of the dividend and appropriation to the Pension Fund, instead of the actual requirement for the replacement of assets. Therefore, the CAG noted that at the end of 2017-2018, the value of over-aged assets pending replacement using this Fund was estimated to be Rs 1,01,194 crore.

[Translation]

You must respond to this. Please also inform the House about the present status of the National Rail Safety Fund, because you had stated on the floor of this House that an investment of Rs. 1 lakh crore would be made in it. This assurance was given by you in this House. [English] The Fund has a corpus of Rs 1,00,000 crore over five years. What is its status? In 2020-2021, Railways allocated Rs 5,000 crore towards the Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh (RRSK). The remaining Rs 15,000 crore will be provided from the general revenues of the Union Government. As per the revised estimates for 2019-2020, Railways is estimated to allocate Rs 2,500 crore towards the Fund, which is 50 percent less than the proposed allocation for that year.

In 2018-2019, the actual allocation towards the Fund was Rs. 3,024 crore, which is 40 percent less than the proposed allocation of Rs. 5,000 crore. With Railways struggling to meet its expenditure and declining internal revenues, it is unclear how Railways will continue to fund the RRSK. As discussed earlier, in 2017-2018, the RRSK was credited through funds from the DRF. The Ministry of Railways mentioned that the adverse resource position of the transporter during 2018-2019 did not permit the desired level of funds to be transferred to the DRF.

The Standing Committee also noted that if funds from the Fund cannot be utilised well, then the purpose of having a dedicated safety fund becomes futile. [Translation] Then what is the justification for maintaining a Safety Fund at all? When you do not have the money, what is the purpose of retaining it merely on paper? Sir, as Members of Parliament, we sometimes request the Railways to undertake certain works in our areas, for which we are willing to provide funds from the MPLADS. The Government agrees in principle, but the amount demanded by the Railways is several times higher than the rates at which the same work can be executed in the open market. I would therefore request the Hon. Minister to utilise our MPLADS funds, but strictly at market rates. The Railways should not charge us inflated amounts, so that we are able

to use our MPLADS funds effectively and in the best interest of our constituencies.

I had earlier placed two or three issues relating to my area before you as well, but no action was taken. I do not know what has happened to you. You pay attention to Bombay, but you do not pay attention to Bengal. I do not know with whom you have a grievance, but no one has any grievance against me.

[English]

At Cossimbazar Station, during doubling, a blunder of monumental proportions has been made. A goods loading line has been built between the station building and the platform, making the passengers' PFs virtually inaccessible to the elderly or divyangjan. There is an urgent requirement for lifts/escalators on both the PFs to facilitate movement of the elderly, sick, and divyangjan.

At the Azimganj-Jiaganj junction on the Lalgola line of the Sealdah Division, a 450-meter link is the only missing portion of the track that would directly connect the east bank of the Hooghly River to the northern parts of India. It is a very strategically important rail bridge, which was initiated during the UPA regime, but during your regime, the work has not been progressing. If it is progressing at all, it is at a snail’s pace. So, I would request the

Government to take note of these kinds of projects that are not being implemented due to a slight lack of initiative from your end. If there is a little initiative from your end, the same would solve the age-old problem. So, I think the Hon. Minister and the Government must try to get it done.

Sir, you have given me time to speak, and we are prepared for Shri Goyal to deliver a speech that may attempt to mislead us. Nevertheless, the questions that we have posed to the Hon. Minister are legitimate. We believe that you are aware of the answers to these questions, and we shall await proper and appropriate responses to them. Thank you.

[*]**SHRIMATI RITI PATHAK (SIDHI):** Our Government has undertaken unprecedented work in the railway sector. Railways play a crucial role in the development of any region, as without adequate means of transport, comprehensive development of any area is not possible. Our Government has taken several important steps to connect every region with railway facilities, and continuous efforts are being made in this direction.

The decision of our Government to undertake large-scale modernisation of railway stations this year, with a view to making rail travel a comfortable and pleasant experience for citizens, is commendable and historic. The historic transformations brought about by our Government in the railway sector are evident to all, whether it is superfast trains like Vande Bharat or the Tejas Express. I am myself a witness to this change, as my Parliamentary Constituency of Sidhi has been extremely backward in terms of rail connectivity. Although Singrauli is described as an industrial hub, there was an acute shortage of trains from this region prior to 2014, even for travelling elsewhere. Singrauli is a place where people from various parts of the country reside, whether from South India, North, Central or North-Eastern regions. The primary reason for this is the presence of major units such as NCL, NTPC, Hindalco,

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

Essar, Reliance and Methy, as Singrauli produces the highest quantity of coal and energy. However, it is a matter of regret to inform the Government that prior to 2014, during the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, there was not a single train from this region to even travel to the State capital. After I was elected to the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, and upon my repeated requests, the then Railway Minister, Shri Suresh Prabhu ji, bestowed a historic gift upon the people of my constituency by introducing two weekly trains from Singrauli to Bhopal and Delhi. For this, I once again express my gratitude to the Union Government.

Even today, the district headquarters of Sidhi in my Parliamentary Constituency remains without rail connectivity. The primary reason for this is the Lalitpur–Singrauli railway project, which had been pending for several years prior to the Sixteenth Lok Sabha. I wish to inform the House that this project remained stalled for years solely due to lack of budgetary allocation. After the formation of the Union Government under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi ji in 2014, I made repeated representations to the Hon. Prime Minister, the Hon. Finance Minister and the Hon. Railway Minister, following which adequate funds began to be allocated. At my request, the Hon. Prime Minister directed the then Chief Secretary of the Government of Madhya Pradesh to expedite

land acquisition and ensure completion of the railway line by 2022. Thereafter, budgetary allocations increased year after year. As a result, the construction of tunnels and bridges along the railway line is now nearing completion, construction of railway stations has commenced, and we are presently at the stage of laying the tracks. If adequate budgetary support continues to be provided by the Union Government, as in the past, it can be stated with confidence that the construction work will be completed within the timeline set by the Hon. Prime Minister. In this context, I urge the Hon. Railway Minister to provide adequate funds for the Lalitpur–Singrauli railway project in the current financial budget.

Another extremely important project in my Parliamentary Constituency is the Singrauli–Katni doubling project, which is a major reason for the inadequate rail facilities in Singrauli. This project was also pending prior to the Sixteenth Lok Sabha. However, after our Government came to power at the Centre, adequate funds were allocated to this project as well, thereby accelerating the pace of construction. In this context, I respectfully urge the Hon. Railway Minister to provide sufficient budgetary allocation for the said project also.

I would like to place before the Hon. Minister several demands relating to my region. The Singrauli–Bhopal Express (22165/66)

and the Singrauli–Nizamuddin Express (22167/68) may be made regular. New train services may be introduced from Singrauli to Jabalpur and Indore. A new weekly train service from Singrauli to Mumbai may be introduced. A new train service from Singrauli to Nagpur may be introduced. Singrauli Railway Station may be modernised. At Bargawan on NH-39, where a railway level crossing causes frequent inconvenience to the public, an overbridge may be constructed. A stoppage of the Singrauli–Nizamuddin Express (22167/68) may be provided at Sarai Railway Station, and the already sanctioned Intercity service between Singrauli and Jabalpur may be made operational at the earliest.

***SHRI KRISHNA PAL SINGH YADAV (GUNA):** My Parliamentary Constituency is very backward from the point of view of railway connectivity. From my home district of Ashok Nagar, there is no daily superfast train to Delhi, and one has to first travel to Bhopal or Bina. Railways play a crucial role in the all-round development of my Parliamentary Constituency. In this regard, there are some important demands as follows:

I request that a fresh survey be conducted for the Sawai Madhopur–Shivpuri–Jhansi railway line and that work on this project be commenced at the earliest. All level crossings in my Parliamentary Constituency should be provided with underbridges or overbridges. The primary survey for the Chanderi–Piprai–Lalitpur railway line has already been completed, yet no work has begun so far; therefore, budgetary allocation should be made immediately and work should be started on this 80-kilometre railway line connecting Piprai and Lalitpur via Chanderi. For several years, there has been a demand for introducing rail connectivity by laying a 120-kilometre railway line from Guna to Aron, Sironj and Ganj Basoda in Vidisha district, for which surveys have been conducted by the Railway Department three to four times; this project should also be approved and taken up without

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

further delay. There is no superfast train from the Ashok Nagar district headquarters of my Parliamentary Constituency directly to Delhi, and therefore a superfast train via Ashok Nagar to Delhi should be introduced. Further, MEMU train services should be started on the routes Guna–Bina, Guna–Bhopal, Bina–Ashok Nagar–Guna–Gwalior, and Indore–Bina–Bhopal.

***SHRI MANSUKHBHAI DHANJIBHAI VASAVA (BHARUCH):** We all know that the Railways is the lifeline of the nation. In view of the rapid pace at which the Railways is progressing on the path of development, I express my special gratitude to the country's illustrious Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji, and the Hon. Railway Minister, Shri Piyush Goyal.

I wish to place before the House certain railway-related issues pertaining to my Parliamentary Constituency of Bharuch in Gujarat.

In Bharuch district, the country's largest industrial corridor in Dahej, namely the PCPIR (Petro Chemicals and Petroleum Investment Region), is expanding. Major industrial units of national importance such as ONGC, Reliance, GNFC, GACL, Birla, BASF, Petronet LNG and Welspun have been operating here for several years. A large number of employees and workers from different parts of the country come here for employment. However, due to the lack of stoppages of trains connecting Bharuch Railway Station to various parts of the country, these passengers face considerable inconvenience. Therefore, providing stoppages of certain trains at Bharuch Railway Station would greatly facilitate ease of travel and provide significant relief to the residents of my Parliamentary Constituency and to passengers in general.

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

- 19053/19054 - Surat Muzaffarpur Express
- 12979 - Bandra Jaipur Superfast Express
- 12660/12659 - Dehradun Kochuveli Express
- 19332/19331 - Indore Kochuveli Express

As part of the programme for beautification of railway stations across the country, Bharuch Railway Station should be included. The 50-year-old station building at Bharuch should be transformed into a new and modern structure. There is an urgent need to relocate parking and related facilities away from the main entrance and undertake proper beautification at that site. In addition to this, attention is also required to be given to the following aspects.

In view of the heavy passenger movement, the circulating area on the western side of Bharuch Railway Station needs to be expanded and made more convenient. There is a need to develop a small garden and fountain in front of the main entrance. The approach area to the western side entry gate should be widened, and unauthorised parking of vehicles at the entrance must be strictly prevented. Passenger security arrangements, particularly on the eastern side, should be strengthened and made more effective.

In addition to the above, I request that Train No. 12989, the Udaipur–Ajmer Superfast Express, be provided with a stoppage at Palej Railway Station, which falls within my Parliamentary

Constituency. A large number of pilgrims travel from this area to Ajmer Sharif, and at present they are compelled to go via Vadodara or Surat. Granting a stoppage of the said train at Palej Railway Station would provide significant convenience and ease to the pilgrims residing in Palej and Karjan.

The work of constructing a railway overbridge at the railway level crossing LC No. 197 at Palej Railway Station should be completed at the earliest, as people from around 20 to 25 surrounding villages are facing daily hardship due to this delay. Since the Ahmedabad–Mumbai route is extremely busy, a train passes every 15 to 20 minutes, causing frequent disruptions to road traffic. Therefore, the construction of the overbridge should be expedited and completed without further delay.

Finally, Train No. 59168 running from Rajpipla to Ankleshwar takes about 2 hours and 45 minutes via the rail route, whereas passengers can cover the same distance by road in about one hour. Hence, its speed limit should be increased and its timing rationalised in accordance with passenger convenience. With these submissions, I support the Demands for Grants.

***SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI (KODARMA):** Several railway-related works have been undertaken in the Kodarma Parliamentary Constituency, and there remains a need for certain important works to be carried out. There is a requirement to provide stoppages of Mail and Express trains at several stations. At many locations, the construction of Road Over Bridges (ROB) and Road Under Bridges (RUB) has not yet been completed, and these works need to be taken up on a priority basis. Among the major demands is the establishment of railway halts, which I shall mention in detail. First, with regard to ROBs, under the Dhanbad Railway Division of East Central Railway, the construction of an ROB at Hazaribagh Road Gate No. 20B-3T at Sariya has not yet commenced. Secondly, the construction of an ROB at Chichaki Gate No. 18 is extremely essential for smooth road traffic movement. Although approvals for both these locations have already been granted by the Ministry of Railways, the non-commencement of construction has caused widespread disappointment among the general public. Further, the construction of an ROB at Pachrukhi, before Rajdhanwar Railway Station, is also necessary in public interest. Similarly, under the Dhanbad Railway Division, there is a need for the construction of a Railway Under Bridge at village Moriyama in Jhumri Telaiya.

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

Within the Kodarma Parliamentary Constituency, on the Kodarma–Giridih rail section, the distance between several stations is approximately 10 kilometres. This makes rail travel inconvenient for residents living in the intervening areas. Local citizens have long been demanding the construction of halt stations at Sijua, Remba and Jharkhand Dham. Jharkhand Dham is a religious tourist destination, where it is extremely necessary to provide a permanent stoppage for trains. From Remba and Sijua, thousands of passengers are compelled to travel long distances every day to other stations in order to undertake their journeys. In public interest, railway halt stations should be constructed at Sijua, Remba and Jharkhand Dham on the Kodarma–Giridih rail section. Further, surveys should be conducted at other such locations within the Kodarma Parliamentary Constituency where the distance between two stations is not convenient for rail passengers, and halt stations should be constructed accordingly.

Indian Railways earns substantial revenue from all the following stations, and owing to the high number of passengers, reserved seats are often not available on the existing trains. In view of passenger convenience, local residents have consistently demanded that more trains be provided with stoppages at these stations. There has been a long-standing demand for providing a

stoppage of the Sealdah Rajdhani Express at Kodarma Station under East Central Railway, the Mumbai Mail Intercity at Chaudhary Bandh Station, the Jammu Tawi–Sealdah Express at Sharma Toad Station, and the Purushottam Express at Parsabad Station. Therefore, keeping public interest in mind, I request the Hon. Railway Minister to take positive steps to grant permanent stoppages at all these stations. I have raised these demands earlier as well. I also strongly urge that the New Delhi–Ranchi Rajdhani Express be operated on a daily basis and routed via Kodarma.

On the newly constructed rail line, there is a serious shortage of passenger and Mail/Express trains, and train services are not being operated in proportion to the number of passengers. A new railway line has been constructed from Giridih to Ranchi via Jamua, Rajdhanwar, Kobaad, Nawadih, Maheshpur, Kodarma Town, Kodarma Junction, Barhi, Padma, Katkamsandi, Hazaribagh Town, Charhi, Barkakana and Ramgarh. At present, only a single passenger train is being operated on a very limited scale, and no Mail or Express trains are running on this section so far. The residents of this region have been demanding that at least two pairs of Mail/Express trains be operated daily between Giridih and Ranchi on this new rail line, so that rail travel becomes convenient for passengers using this section. The construction of the new rail

line had raised considerable expectations among the general public, but the absence of Mail and Express train services has led to widespread disappointment among local residents. Therefore, I request the Union Government, in public interest, to commence the operation of two pairs of new Mail/Express trains from Giridih to Ranchi via Kodarma, Hazaribagh and Ramgarh.

I would like to request the Hon. Railway Minister to introduce a new train service from Rampur Hat in West Bengal to Ranchi via Kodarma. If this train is operated on this route, connecting major religious centres such as Tarapith Shakti Peeth at Rampur Hat, Baba Basukinath at Dumka, Baba Dham at Deoghar, Jharkhand Dham at Giridih, Dhwajadhari Dham at Kodarma and Maa Chhinnamastika at Ranchi Road, rail travel will become extremely convenient for religious tourists. I further propose that the train operating on this route may be named the Maa Tara Express. Additionally, there is an urgent need for doubling of the Kodarma–Madhupur rail section, as the single rail line is causing significant operational difficulties in the running of trains.

There is a need to construct a new railway line from Hazaribagh Road to Hazaribagh Town. The distance between these two stations is approximately 70 kilometres, and rail travel is not convenient for the general public residing in these areas. In order to travel to other

metropolitan cities, people are compelled to cover long distances by road before accessing rail services. I request the Ministry of Railways to conduct the survey for the construction of a new railway line from Hazaribagh Road to Hazaribagh Town within the current financial year.

Jharkhand has several major tourist destinations; however, no special facilities are being provided by the Railways for tourists at destination stations, leading to considerable dissatisfaction among visitors. To promote tourism in Jharkhand, it is necessary to undertake passenger amenities along with beautification works at all major railway stations. At Kodarma Railway Station, there is no air-conditioned waiting lounge for VIP guests, causing them significant inconvenience. Therefore, there is a demand for the construction of a well-equipped, air-conditioned VIP waiting lounge at Kodarma Station. At the same time, fully equipped waiting halls should also be constructed for passengers of all other categories.

Finally, I request the Ministry of Railways to take serious and considered decisions on all the demands raised by me above and to enhance rail travel facilities for the people of the Kodarma Parliamentary Constituency, as well as for the State of Jharkhand, thereby according them due convenience and dignity.

***SHRI RAMCHARAN BOHRA (JAIPUR):** I support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Railways and also express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Railway Minister, because on account of their successful implementation, Indian Railways has made remarkable progress over the past six years.

Indian Railways is the world's third-largest rail network and safely transports crores of people to their destinations every day. It plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of the country. While the Railways is the primary mode of transport in India, it has also become an indispensable part of the nation's life. The movement of trains has had a profound influence on our country's arts, history and literature, and the Railways also serves as a crucial link fostering unity in diversity among people of different regions of the country. Even today, rail travel and freight movement remain the most convenient and affordable means of transport.

Our Government has given a new direction to the Railways, under which comprehensive modernisation is being undertaken. Along with improving passenger amenities at railway stations, emphasis is also being laid on cleanliness, and the rail network is being extended even to remote and inaccessible regions of the

* Speech was laid on the Table.

country. The progress of the Railways is intrinsically linked with the progress of the nation, and at present we have presented a new and progressive image of railway development before the world.

Since Independence, the Railways was often used as a tool for political gains, which led to a significant imbalance in railway services across the country. However, the Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji accorded priority to the modernisation of the Railways and to the completion of long-pending projects. An investment of Rs. 20 lakh crore is being made to convert 10,000 kilometres of trunk routes into high-speed corridors and to modernise the railway system. Half of this total allocation, that is, Rs. 10 lakh crore, will be spent on increasing the speed of trains. Under this initiative, routes such as Delhi–Mumbai, Delhi–Howrah and Bengaluru–Hyderabad will be upgraded and converted into high-speed corridors, and the stations along these routes will also be transformed into world-class terminals.

To enhance the speed of the Railways, the Modi Government is placing the greatest emphasis on strengthening railway infrastructure. The target is to electrify all broad-gauge railway lines by 2022. There is also a plan to install solar power plants at all railway stations by 2020–21. Indian Railways has set a global benchmark by operating the world’s first solar-powered train.

Unmanned railway crossings, which were once a major cause of rail accidents, have now been completely eliminated.

The outdated system of water filling in railway coaches is being modernised, which will put an end to the problem of water shortages during train journeys. In 2014, the coach furnishing factory at Rae Bareli was accorded the status of a public sector undertaking by the Government. As a result, large-scale investments were made and it was renamed the Modern Coach Factory. This is the country's first coach manufacturing unit where the entire production process is carried out through robotics, leading to a significant increase in output. While 140 coaches were manufactured here in 2014–15, production rose to 711 coaches in 2017–18 and further increased to 1,422 coaches in 2018–19.

I would like to place before the Hon. Minister a few suggestions pertaining to my Parliamentary Constituency. On the Sawai Madhopur railway line, there is a single underpass between Sanganer and Malpura Road, for which approval of Rs. 930 crore has already been granted; approval may now be accorded for converting it into a double underpass. At Sanganer Railway Station, the Kalyanpura level crossing remains closed most of the time due to the standing of goods trains, causing serious obstruction to traffic; therefore, an underpass or an overbridge should be constructed there. In Jaipur city, the boundary wall work along the

railway line has been almost completed, but remains unfinished at certain locations, leading to frequent accidents; this work should be completed at the earliest. A Vande Bharat Express should be operated between Jaipur and Delhi, and a Tejas train should be introduced between Jaipur and Gandhidham via Samdadi and Bhildi-Pokaran.

* **SHRI RAJENDRA AGRAWAL (MEERUT):** This is the eighth Budget presented by the Government led by Hon. Shri Narendra Modi ji. From the very first Budget, the direction and momentum imparted by the Government towards nation-building have ensured that our country is progressing continuously. Dedicated to the poor and the deprived, this Government, through the Prime Minister's vision, firm resolve and tireless hard work, has infused new life across the entire nation. The Railways is the engine of the country's economic development and should function as such; however, for decades, the development of the Railways was not given due attention with this perspective. Year after year, Railway Budgets were presented, but they remained burdened by the political ambitions of individuals or parties. Announcements were made, yet their implementation was often forgotten by successive Railway Ministers. I wish to congratulate the Hon. Railway Minister, Shri Piyush Goyal ji, for completely abandoning these outdated practices that had become a burden on the Railways and rendered it inefficient, and for successfully steering the Railways with a new vision and determination to truly make it the engine of the nation's development. Whether it is the strengthening and expansion of railway infrastructure, the doubling and electrification of railway

* Speech was laid on the Table.

lines, the manufacture of new coaches, passenger services and safety, the upgradation and cleanliness of railway stations, improving efficiency through better use of digital technology, or the expansion of rail services in strategically important frontier regions such as the North-East, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand, the Hon. Railway Minister has been undertaking comprehensive transformation of the Railways by addressing every aspect in a holistic manner. By introducing new services such as Tejas, Vande Bharat and Kisan Rail, commendable efforts have been made to make the lives of the common people easier and to ensure the Railways' contribution towards the goal of doubling farmers' income. Under the leadership of the Hon. Railway Minister Shri Piyush Goyal and the Minister of State for Railways Shri Suresh Angadi, the Railways today stands fully prepared to play its role in building a New India in line with the resolve of the Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. These issues have already been discussed in the House by Hon. Members, and I do not wish to repeat them.

Several works have been carried out by the Ministry of Railways in my Parliamentary Constituency. Stations such as Meerut City, Meerut Cantt, Hapur, Kharkhauda, Partapur and Pawlikhas have been upgraded, and various passenger amenities have been developed at these stations. The construction of 19

underpasses has ensured safe movement for villagers. The work of doubling and electrification of railway lines has been completed. Many other small and large works have also been completed, for which I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Hon. Railway Minister on my behalf and on behalf of the people of my constituency. Under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi ji, the Ministry of Railways has undertaken historic initiatives, and it is therefore natural that expectations have also increased. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Railway Minister to some of these expectations, and I am confident that he will certainly give due consideration to them.

Meerut in western Uttar Pradesh and Panipat in Haryana are extremely important commercial and economic centres. However, there is still no direct rail connectivity between Meerut and Panipat. Meerut is a major hub for handlooms, the sports goods industry, the publishing industry, gold jewellery manufacturing, as well as jaggery and sugar production. Acknowledging the importance of connecting Meerut with an important city like Panipat by rail, the Government had allocated Rs. 300 crore for conducting a survey in the Railway Budget of 2017. This rail link would accelerate development not only in Meerut but also in Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat and Shamli, as well as in Panipat and adjoining areas of Haryana. I therefore request the Government to kindly issue directions for establishing rail connectivity between Meerut and Panipat.

Hastinapur, located in Meerut district, was the capital of the Kauravas during the Mahabharata period and later of the Pandavas. Lord Krishna also visited Hastinapur on several occasions. This town, which has been an extremely important centre of our historical and religious heritage, is today a world-renowned Jain pilgrimage site. Further, at a distance of just three kilometres from Hastinapur lies the village of Saifpur Karmchandpur, the birthplace of Shri Dharam Singh, one of the Panj Pyare, where a grand Gurudwara has been constructed. A large number of devotees and pilgrims from across the country and abroad visit these sacred places. Keeping in view the mythological and historical significance of Hastinapur, the Government led by Shri Narendra Modi ji has declared Hastinapur as an iconic site. On behalf of the entire region, I once again express my gratitude to the Union Government for this decision. There has been a long-standing demand for rail connectivity between Meerut and Hastinapur to facilitate tourists and pilgrims. I therefore request the Government to kindly initiate the construction of a railway line between Meerut and Hastinapur to accelerate the development of this region associated with Lord Krishna and the Mahabharata.

A large number of devotees from Meerut, Hapur, and Bulandshahr go to Mathura and Vrindavan to perform the

Parikrama of Govardhan Ji. Therefore, a train should be run from Meerut to Mathura-Vrindavan via Hapur-Khurja-Aligarh.

Prayagraj houses the High Court as well as several important offices of the State Government, due to which a large number of passengers from Meerut and other districts of western Uttar Pradesh travel to Prayagraj. At present, the Sangam Express is the only direct train operating between Meerut and Prayagraj, departing from Meerut in the evening and reaching Prayagraj the following morning. Similarly, a large number of devotees from Meerut and nearby areas regularly travel for darshan at Vaishno Devi. The Government has proposed to operate Tejas trains on around 150 routes. I request that a Tejas train be operated from Meerut to Katra via Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur, and another Tejas train from Meerut to Prayagraj via Hapur, Bulandshahr, Khurja and Aligarh.

Meerut and Hapur are extremely important cities within the National Capital Region. Meerut is located about 70 kilometres from Delhi on the Delhi–Ambala rail section, while Hapur is barely 60 kilometres from Delhi on the Delhi–Moradabad rail section. Thousands of passengers commute daily between Meerut, Hapur and Delhi for various purposes. The shuttle train operating between New Delhi and Hapur is extended up to Bulandshahr on the Hapur side and up to Rewari on the Delhi side, due to which it does not

operate on time. Moreover, the number of coaches in this train, which is extremely important for passengers of Hapur and Pilkhuwa, has also been reduced. As a result, its utility for the people of this region has diminished. Therefore, I request that a new shuttle or passenger train be operated between New Delhi and Hapur.

On the Meerut–Khurja railway line, water accumulates in the underpasses even after light rainfall, causing extreme difficulty in the movement of villagers. During the monsoon season, due to waterlogging, access routes for residents of nearby villages are completely blocked. Despite the installation of rainwater harvesting systems in all these underpasses, the accumulation of water underneath indicates technical deficiencies. I request that a technical inspection of the rainwater harvesting systems of all underpasses on this rail section be conducted and it be ensured that water does not collect there, so that the difficulties faced by villagers residing on both sides of the railway track are resolved.

The MEMU train services No. 64553/54 operating between Delhi–Meerut and Delhi–Hapur–Moradabad–Anand Vihar should be run regularly and in a time-bound manner. At Meerut Cantt Station, considering the large population of Kankarkhera, it is extremely necessary to construct an overbridge at the station to facilitate the movement of two-wheelers. Kharkhauda is an

important station between Meerut and Hapur. Residents of Meerut South and the rural areas surrounding Kharkhauda are compelled to travel 10 to 20 kilometres across the entire city of Meerut to board the Nauchandi Express and the Sangam Express. Due to traffic congestion and other issues, this often takes several hours. I therefore request the Government to kindly provide stoppages of the Nauchandi Express and the Sangam Express at Kharkhauda Station.

Hapur town is the district headquarters of Hapur district and also a highly important junction on the Delhi–Moradabad and Meerut–Khurja rail sections. Passengers travelling up to Meerut and Bulandshahr come to Hapur and use several trains for onward journeys. From the point of view of facilitating smooth movement of passengers, it is extremely necessary to provide both up and down stoppages of the following trains at Hapur Railway Station:

15035/15036 Kathgodam-Anand Vihar Sampark Kranti Express; and

12391/12392 New Delhi-Patna Shramjeevi Express

As I submitted at the outset, there are high expectations from the Hon. Railway Minister, of which I have mentioned only a few. I am hopeful that the Hon. Railway Minister will certainly give due attention to these matters and fulfil these expectations.

***SHRI BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY (AJMER):** I support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Railways and also express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Railway Minister, because owing to their effective implementation, Indian Railways has made remarkable progress over the past six years.

Indian Railways is the world's third-largest rail network and safely transports crores of people to their destinations every day. It plays a vital role in the social and economic development of the country. While the Railways is the principal mode of transport in India, it has also become an essential part of the nation's life. The movement of trains has had a profound influence on our country's art, history and literature, and the Railways also serves as an important link fostering unity in diversity among people of different regions of the country. Even today, rail travel and freight transportation remain the most convenient and affordable means of transport.

Our Government has given a new direction to the Railways, under which comprehensive modernisation is being undertaken. Along with enhancing passenger amenities at railway stations, cleanliness is being promoted, and the rail network is being extended even to remote and inaccessible regions of the country.

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

The progress of the Railways is intrinsically linked with the progress of the nation, and at present we have presented a new and progressive image of railway development before the world.

My Parliamentary Constituency comprises the border districts of Shri Ganganagar and Hanumangarh, which are located very close to the Pakistani border. Over the past six years, unprecedented progress has been achieved in the field of rail services in these districts, progress that had not been witnessed since Independence. These border districts are now directly connected not only with North India but also with South India, for which the Hon. Railway Minister deserves congratulations. Recently, the Railway Department has approved an allocation of Rs. 4 crore for covering six underpasses in Shri Ganganagar district of my Parliamentary Constituency. I thank the Hon. Railway Minister for this significant initiative.

Along with this, I would also like to draw the attention of the Hon. Railway Minister to certain long-pending railway-related issues of my Parliamentary Constituency. There has been a long-standing demand for the commencement of the Amritsar–Bikaner Garib Rath train (via Ludhiana, Firozpur, Fazilka, Abohar, Shri Ganganagar, Shri Karanpur, Raisinghnagar and Suratgarh), for which approval has already been granted. I request that its operation be started at the earliest.

I further request that Train Nos. 22981/22982 and 22998/22997, operating between Shri Ganganagar and Kota/Jhalawar, may be routed beyond Shri Ganganagar via Kesrisinghpur, Shri Karanpur, Gajsinghpur, Raisinghnagar, Jaitsar, Suratgarh and Bikaner up to Jaipur. Considering adequate operational viability, a washing line should be constructed at Hanumangarh Junction, a long-pending demand. A new Intercity Express should be introduced between Shri Ganganagar and Jaipur, and its timetable should be so designed that it provides direct connectivity with the Jaipur–Mumbai train. In view of the genuine demand of the people of my Parliamentary Constituency, Train Nos. 14055/14056, the Delhi–Dibrugarh Brahmaputra Mail Express, should be extended up to Shri Ganganagar. Further, Train Nos. 12403/12404, the Jaipur–Prayagraj–Jaipur Express, should be extended up to Hanumangarh via Churu, thereby directly connecting my Parliamentary Constituency with Prayagraj. Stoppages of all passenger trains should also be ensured at Sardargarh Dalpatsinghpur, a Sansad Adarsh Gram, and at Amarpura Rathan Railway Stations, a demand that has been pending for a long time, which would benefit a large number of daily passengers. Under the Bikaner Division of North Western Railway, Keshavnagar Railway Station, located between Shriramsinghpur and Shri Vijaynagar stations, should be approved

as a halt station. It is a religious place where a fair is organised every year on the occasion of Amavasya at the sacred Gurudwara, attracting a large number of devotees. Moreover, Shri Ganganagar district is a Sikh-dominated region. From the point of view of passenger load, Pilibanga Railway Station, falling within Hanumangarh in my Parliamentary Constituency, is an important station where renovation and beautification works are urgently required, as both Express and Passenger trains have stoppages there.

I request the Hon. Railway Minister to kindly take note of all these demands and ensure their early fulfilment. With these submissions, I support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Railways.

***SHRI SURESH KASHYAP (SHIMLA):** Indian Railways is the world's fourth-largest rail network, established on 16 April 1853, and today it extends from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. During the tenure of the present Government, the Railways has witnessed rapid development, whether in terms of passenger amenities or the construction of modern railway stations. In this Budget as well, efforts have been made to further accelerate the development of the Railways, be it through new broad-gauge lines, new railway lines or electrification. Initiatives such as Kisan Rail, enabling farmers to transport their produce to markets within the country and abroad, enhancement of solar power capacity along railway lines, promotion of Tejas-type trains, and the introduction of high-speed trains have also been emphasised. However, if I speak about my State, which is a major tourist destination, even after 70 years of Independence, railway connectivity here remains negligible. Whether it is a matter of connecting regions such as Baddi–Barotiwala, Nalagarh or Paonta Sahib, which is a pharmaceutical hub, or connecting renowned religious places, I wish to demand that these areas be connected by rail at the earliest so as to promote further industrial development. Along with this, the entire State of Himachal Pradesh should be connected to the rail network, and its

* Speech was laid on the Table

temples should also be brought under this network. Himachal Pradesh is Devbhoomi. If sacred places such as the Jwalamukhi Temple and Maa Chamunda Temple in Kangra, the Naina Devi Temple in Bilaspur, the Gurudwara at Paonta Sahib, and the Bala Sundari Temple at Trilokpur are connected through rail connectivity, a much larger number of tourists will visit the State. Himachal Pradesh has immense potential for railway development, and I urge the Hon. Minister to accord due attention to the State in this regard. I also request that a train service be introduced between Kalka and Haridwar so that people have greater convenience in travel and tourism is further promoted. The Kalka–Shimla heritage railway should also be provided with enhanced passenger amenities. Considering the problem of traffic congestion in Shimla city, which is a major tourist destination, a mono rail system should be introduced. I further request that Jabli Station, which lies on the Kalka–Shimla railway line and was closed a few years ago, be reopened.

[English]

***SHRIMATI SUMALATHA AMBAREESH (MANDYA):** The Indian railway is a National transporter and it plays a vital role in providing cheaper transportation facilities to the people living in the nuke and corner of the country. It is contributing to a great extent to connect the people of different regions, languages and cultures.

The Hon. Finance Minister in her budget for 2020-2021 provided the railways a budgetary allocation of Rs 70,000 crore and an outlay for capital expenditure amounting to Rs 1.61 Iakh crores from Rs.1.56 lakh crores in 2019-2020.

In the 2020-21 budget, funds of Rs 12,000 crore have been allocated for construction of new lines, Rs 2,250 crore for gauge conversion, Rs 700 crore for doubling, Rs. 5,786.97 crore for rolling stock and Rs. 1,650 crore for signalling and telecom. Rs 2,725.63 crore is allocated for rail passenger comfort in this budget. It is also proposed freight loading at 1,265 MT, which is 42 MT (3.4 per cent) incremental over RE 2019-20. The operating ratio, which was envisaged to be 95 per cent in BE 2019-20 and revised to 97.46 per cent in RE 2019-2020, now stands at 96.2 per cent in BE 2020-

* Speech was laid on the Table.

21. The budget also proposed setting up of a large solar power capacity alongside the rail tracks on land owned by the railways.

The Government has proposed to setting up of a "Krishi Rail" through PPP arrangements with an aim to build a seamless National cold supply chain for perishables". I welcome this step of the Government as it helps our farmers to earn better prices of their produce as there will be refrigerated coaches in express and freight trains to keep the perishable produces for long duration. Another important announcement is that commissioning of 550 wi-fi spots in as many as railway stations is also part of the announcement in the budget. Karnataka is also expected to get some wi- fi facilities too.

As far as South-Western Railway (SWR) received a total grant of 2,709 crore for 2020-2021 in the Union Budget. The Rs.2,709 crore from the Union Government includes capital and extra-budgetary resource funds, the highest ever after SWR’s formation.

Bengaluru is considered as Silicon valley of India, however, recently the city has earned the infamy of being the most congested city in the world. The Union Government understood the concerns of Bengalureans, who are forced to endure gruelling commutes in the absence of a robust public transport system. Now the Union Government has announced the suburban rail project for Bengaluru.

The proposed 148-km-long Bengaluru suburban transport project at a cost of Rs.18,600 crore, which would have fares on the metro model. The Centre would provide 20 per cent of equity and facilitate external assistance of up to 60 per cent of the project cost, the suburban rail system could be a game changer for Bengaluru as far as transportation service is concerned. I hope it is a great step in further enhancing the Bengaluru and its surrounding region's prosperity. With suburban and metro and road infrastructure, the IT and BT city Bengaluru will certainly become the undisputed leader in industry and innovation.

I would like to request the hon'ble Railway Minister to consider the following demands of my Parliamentary Constituency Mandya in Karnataka state.

Allocation of fund to be utilised for the construction of RUB at number L C 73 near Mandya Station yard on Mysore – Bangalore Railway line. It has been pending for 12years. People are demanding for construction of RUB at number L C 73 for smooth movement of the traffic.

There is a need for installing Lift/Escalator at Mandya and also at Pandavapura halt Station to facilitate commuters especially senior citizens to use the skywalk to reach the platforms without any difficulties.

Railway under pass is constructed unscientifically at Doranahalli near Krishnarajasagar Railway station on Arasikere-Hassan-Mysore Railway line. However this Railway under pass is not serving the purpose intended for as it has a very narrow passage and also far away from the railway junction. So it is not at all helpful to ease the traffic movement. Instead it is creating huge mess for the movement of heavy vehicles. Hence I would like to request you to look into the difficulties arising out of this Railway under pass and take immediate necessary measures to widen the same by sending a team of railway officials concerned to suggest the necessary modification to ease the traffic movement.

[Translation]

***SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT (LOHARDAGA):** I support the Railway Budget for 2020–21 presented in the House by the Hon. Finance Minister. Under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, with the resolve to bring about comprehensive improvement in the country's economic condition and to establish India as a global economic power, I wholeheartedly welcome the Railway Budget proposals, which have been presented keeping in mind every sector and every section of society.

The Government has undertaken significant work in recent years to bring about wide-ranging reforms in the Railways and to enhance passenger facilities, quality and cleanliness, thereby making the Railways more people-centric. Along with expanding railway connectivity to remote and difficult regions of the country, Indian Railways, through efficient operations, is today playing a leading role in the field of public transportation.

As you are aware, I represent the tribal-dominated Lohardaga Parliamentary Constituency of the State of Jharkhand in the Lok Sabha. Therefore, I fully understand and appreciate the hardships and circumstances of people living in remote forest areas due to

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

lack of development and geographical challenges. Keeping in view the welfare of the tribal communities residing in my Parliamentary Constituency, across the State of Jharkhand and in all tribal-dominated regions of the country, and for the holistic and timely development of these areas, I request that the following railway-related issues be included in the Railway Budget 2020–21. There has been a long-standing demand from my Parliamentary Constituency and adjoining areas for the construction of a new railway line from Lohardaga to Korba via Gumla. This would not only connect the States of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh but would also bring Gumla district, which has so far remained deprived of railway facilities, onto the rail network. There is an urgent need for doubling of the Ranchi–Lohardaga railway line via Tori, which would enable expansion of rail services in this region and also facilitate the operation of premium trains such as the Rajdhani Express on this route. The New Delhi–Ranchi Rajdhani Express should be extended via Tori up to Lohardaga, which would save passengers four to five hours of travel time and connect Lohardaga with Rajdhani-type trains. A new railway service should be introduced from Ranchi to Rourkela via Lohardaga, which would greatly benefit farmers of the region and prove extremely important in providing market access for vegetables and forest produce. There has also been a long-pending demand from the local population for

a stoppage of the Alleppey Express at Pokla Station; such a stoppage would connect Gumla district to the railway network and open avenues for the local population to connect with the southern States of the country.

The issues raised by me above will provide special benefits to residents living in tribal-dominated and forest areas of the country. Therefore, I request that these extremely important railway-related issues pertaining to my Parliamentary Constituency be duly considered and included.

I am hopeful that the matters raised by me will be incorporated in the Union Budget Bill 2020–21 relating to the Demands for Grants of the Railways, and that these issues of public interest will find due place in the Railway Budget. Accordingly, I extend my full support to the Budget Bill 2020–21 (Railways) presented by the Government in the Lok Sabha, and we remain confident that Indian Railways will continue to render its uninterrupted service to the nation.

***SHRI VINOD LAKHAMASHI CHAVDA (KACHCHH):** I would like to bring to the notice of the Hon. Railway Minister certain demands pertaining to my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency. A new train service should be introduced between Bhuj and Delhi. A new train should also be started between Mumbai and Bhuj. In addition, daily or weekly train services should be introduced from Bhuj to various other States such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haridwar, and the States of South India. Further, a train service should be commenced between Saurashtra and Mokshi, and between Saurashtra and Kachchh, within the State of Gujarat.

* Speech was laid on the Table

***SHRI ARJUN LAL MEENA (UDAIPUR):** I support the Railway Budget and would like to place before the Government the following demands of the people of my Parliamentary Constituency. The gauge conversion project from Udaipur to Ahmedabad (Gujarat) via Himmatnagar should be completed at the earliest, and adequate budgetary provision should be made for this project. An announcement should be made, along with budgetary allocation, for laying a new railway line from Dungarpur to Banswara up to Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh. Udaipur should be connected by railway with Pali and Sirohi. A Tejas-type train service should be operated from Delhi to Udaipur City. Further, the Ministry of Railways should conduct a special recruitment drive for SC, ST and OBC categories to fill vacant backlog posts.

* Speech was laid on the Table

[English]

***SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL (DOMARIYAGANJ):** First of all, | would like to express my gratitude to the Hon'ble Minister of Railways for approving the much requested new line from Bahraich to Khalilabad via Shravasti, Balrampur and Domariyaganj, which is going to positively impact the lives of millions of people living in this region. In the words of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji "Indian Railways is the growth engine of nation's Vikas Yatra"

In the past five years, the Government has made safety the foremost priority of Indian Railways. Indian Railways has achieved its best ever safety record in 2018-19. There has been 81% drop in number of deaths from 152 in 2013-14 to 29 this year (upto Jan 31, 2019). This is a result of holistic efforts. All Unmanned Level Crossings (UMLCs) on Broad Gauge network have been eliminated. Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh (RRSK) fund of Rs. 1 lakh crore has been created for safety expenditure.

Laying the foundations of infrastructure for a New India, there has been a quantum leap in capital expenditure. Total capital expenditure between 2014-19 is Rs. 5.1 lakh crore which is more than double of total expenditure during 2009-14. Railways is

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connecting India at a faster pace with a 59% increase in the average pace of commissioning New Line / Doubling / 3rd & 4th line projects from 4.1 Kms during 2009- 14 per day to 6.53 Kms per day during 2014-18.

Aspirations of the people of North East were fulfilled with completion of 4.94 Kms long Bogibeel Bridge, longest rail- cum-road bridge in India. Now, journey from Itanagar to Dibrugarh is only 180 Kms, reducing the travel time from 24 hrs to only 5 hrs, Commuter travel in urban India has been given sufficient attention. Bangalore Suburban System is being developed with ongoing projects worth more than Rs. 15,700 crore. This will benefit about 15 lakh commuters. Mumbai Suburban Systems are also being modernised with ongoing projects worth more than Rs. 70,000 crore which will benefit about 75 lakh commuters.

India entered a new era of mobility with Vande Bharat Express - India's first high-tech, energy-efficient, self-propelled train. This is a prime example of the success of Make in India movement. This train will be proliferated across India and also exported globally.

The Ahmedabad-Mumbai High-speed Rail (HSR) will revolutionise the transport sector in India through speed, safety and service. Besides the Make in India benefits from the HSR project, Railways is creating large scale employment and economic

development through sanctioned projects in Latur, Maharashtra; New Bongaigaon, Assam; Lumding, Assam; Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh and Sonipat, Haryana. Setting records for Indian Railways, Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh has successfully executed world's 1st ever conversion of diesel locos into electric loco to enable Mission Electrification.

Railways has embarked on transitioning to sustainable rail transport with a six times increase in electrification from 610 RKM during 2013-14 to 4,087 RKM during 2017-18. 100% Electrification of Broad Gauge Routes of Indian Railways is targeted by 2021-22.

Railways has achieved significant milestones in moving the country's economy faster with the highest ever freight loading in 2018-19. Freight earnings have touched their highest level and is expected to be about Rs. 1.43 lakh crore in BE 2019-20. Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFC) are gateways to India's superfast growth and development. First sections of Eastern DFC (Bhadan to Khurja, 200 Kms) and Western DFC (Rewari to Madar, 200 Kms) have been completed.

Railways is improving Passenger services including a complete makeover of stations by installing modern facilities including escalators, lifts, free wi-fi etc. and using local art in the design. 4

stations are undergoing redevelopment - Habibganj, Gandhinagar, Charbagh and Gomtinagar. Beautification of 65 stations have been completed using local art. Railways has improved trains and coaches including launching the Tejas, Antyodaya and Humsafar trains and Deen Dayal and Anubhuti coaches. Connecting Passengers to the digital world, high speed WiFi service has been provided at more than 800 stations. Pan India rollout of paperless Unreserved Ticketing (UTS) has been done to make ticketing convenient and hassle free.

Catering has also been a focus area with compulsory printing of MRP on all food items and use of artificial intelligence to monitor food production in base kitchens for improving quality and hygiene.

Offering its tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and contributing to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, Railways has paid attention to hygiene with efforts such as record installation of Bio-toilets, third party independent surveys, integrated mechanized cleaning and on Board Housekeeping Services (OBHS).

Indian Railways is also playing its part in promoting tourism and providing a wonderful experience to tourists. It is also connecting India to their roots with the launch of Ramayan Express, Panj Takht Express, and Buddhist Circuit Train.

Rail Drishti dashboard has been launched, encompassing all the digitisation efforts in Indian Railways and promoting transparency and accountability. It brings information from various sources on a single platform and gives access to key statistics and parameters to every citizen of the country. The available information has been categorized under 15 user friendly sections on the Dashboard.

India's first National Rail and Transportation Institute has been launched with Ist academic session started with; two undergraduate Programmes - B.Sc. in Transportation Technology and BBA in Transportation Management with 103 students. Rs. 421 crore has been sanctioned for next 5 years.

Recognising the significance of empowering and upskilling the Railways family, various steps have been taken including delegation of powers. Historic recruitment drive is being undertaken with 1.5 lakh vacancies being filled. 2.3 lakh individuals will be recruited over next two years.

Indian Railways has also focused on digital initiatives for bringing transparency and accountability to its business practices. E- reverse auction policy has been issued. 100% e- procurement is being done through a single web-portal. Simpler approval processes in Research Designs and Standards Organisation have reduced process time from 30 months to 6 months.

Therefore, in light of all the points already mentioned, I would again like to express my support for the Demand for Grants 2020-21 for the Ministry for Railways.

*__SHRI GAUTHAM SIGAMANI PON (KALLAKURICHI):__ I am bringing the following points to the attention of the Government for urgent action and redressal. Southern Railways stations, trains , that too remote rural pockets of Tamil Nadu are manned by North Indian staff. Members, who neither understand nor speak a word in Tamil. The worst part is they are not conversant in English language as well. I don't have to remind that rural poor are the people who patronise the Indian Railway and most of them in any part of this vast land speak only their tongue. To add up they are the ones to be serviced properly for that happens to be only cheap and convenient mode of communication. So it is very unfortunate that they are put into lots of hardship in approaching for services and grievances redressal. Hence ensuring that the recruitment process is fair and does not make any discrimination in selection process. Not just Railways, any Government of India department's office in Tamil Nadu is filled with North Indians. How did this come about is no secret. The recruitment exams in north is thoroughly liberal and free. This large scale encroachment does not bode well for the unity and harmony of India. Governance is about reaching out and establishing communication and this wholesome encroachment including Railways employment is thoroughly unfair and needs

* Speech was laid on the Table

immediate correction mechanism. The request is in the interest of common men everywhere.

Another very important point that is to be addressed is the callous /uncaring attitude of Railway officials. As people's representatives, the Members of Parliament approach local level Divisional officials with minor requests, represented to them by local villagers, business communities, trade bodies etc. This request range from stopping of trains at certain unserviced places and extension stoppage by a few more minutes etc. But none of them heeded to by most of the officials. This attitude is not warranted and hinders the very purpose of being and undermines the role of people's representatives.

Another pressing issue that needs to be attended immediately is the broad gauge railroad connecting Chinna Salem and Kallakurichi . This 16 KM project was started way back in 2006 itself. The Chinna Salem is located on the Virudhachalam - Salem railway track. This area is an industrial belt with large number of Modern rice mills, Sago factories, Textile mills and a few Sugar mills. The units are located on various points in adjacent areas. Hence, Chinna Salem is a trade hub with lots of economic activities and most of them being connected to agricultural products. Agricultural produces from here are moved to various parts of the country. Thanks to the present Government, the project pending for long saw

the light of the day, with the Honourable Ministers for Railways Thiru Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, laying foundation stone on 07.02.2016. The special features involved in the proposed project are (1) Big bridges-2; (2) Small bridges 22 ;(3) Level crossings-2; (4) Road over bridge-1;(5) Road subways-10. The estimated cost of the project is 116.61 crores. But the sad part is the work has not taken off for want of administrative sanction. When approached it is informed that the project is pending because the Government of Tamil Nadu has not acquired the necessary land. It is well known that the present Tamil Nadu Government is very quick in positively responding to the directives from the Union Government. Hence, it's submitted by me, as the Member of Parliament, that effective steps/directives may be given to Tamil Nadu Government and fulfill long pending dire requirements of Kallakkurichi constituency and complete the project on priority.

In Salem district's Ayothiapattinam Union, there is a village called M Perumalpalayam, which houses about 6000 Arundhadiyar Dalits. If they are to reach near by places for going to schools and colleges across the railway track connecting Virudhachalam and Salem, they have to travel through a roundabout route about ten kilometres long and even at the emergency situations like child birth and other hospitalisations also they have to travel so long. Hence, I request that a railway under bridge should necessarily be built to

facilitate them. This is an utmost important work that is to be done urgently to help the under privileged people to tide over the emergencies.

The very unfortunate thing about Virudhachalam- Salem railroad is that the track through which more than fifteen trains pass by has several unmanned rail crossings. Emergent actions required there. Manning these crossings should be done at war footing.

***SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA (JALAUN):** I would like to submit that new railway lines should be constructed within my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency under the Jhansi Division of Central Railway. Approval may kindly be accorded for a new railway line from Konch to Moth via Jalaun and Kuthaund up to Diviyapur, another new railway line from Konch to Bhind via Nadigaon, and a new railway line from Orai to Mahoba, so that the people of the region may benefit from improved rail connectivity. Further, I request that Train Nos. 12533–12534, the Pushpak Express, be provided with stoppages at Pukhrayan and Etah Junction, and that the newly introduced Mahakal Express be given a stoppage at Orai Station, so that the people of this area may conveniently travel towards South India.

I also request the Hon. Railway Minister to note that on the 200-kilometre railway stretch between Jhansi and Kanpur, which has nearly 25 railway stations, there is not a single train available for the people of this region to travel directly to New Delhi.

I request the Hon. Railway Minister that the Shram Shakti Express, which operates from New Delhi to Kanpur and then returns from Kanpur to New Delhi, may be extended further. Train No. 12452, the Shram Shakti Express, departs from New Delhi at

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* Speech was laid on the Table

11.55 p.m. and reaches Kanpur at 6.30 a.m., after which it remains stationed at Kanpur for nearly 17 hours till about 11.45 p.m. If this train is extended up to Jhansi, it would directly connect the 25 stations on the Kanpur–Jhansi section with New Delhi, and the train that presently remains idle for long hours would be utilised for the benefit of the general public.

[English]

*__DR. AMOL RAMSING KOLHE (SHIRUR):__ Pune and Nasik cities have undergone rapid economic growth in recent years, and along with this growth a sharp rise in the volume of people and goods being transported in the Pune Nasik route have come up. Mumbai, Pune and Nasik are together referred as golden triangle of Maharashtra where pace of socio-economic development is very fast.

At present there is no direct link between these important cities of Maharashtra state. The new Proposal is not only likely to draw more number of trains but at the same time high speed travel will also attract more number of passengers to the route. It will also act as a catalyst to the industrial corridor along the belt, thus shall generate more revenue to the region. The details of the new proposal are: length: 235.15 Km; Speed Potential: semi high speed with 200 KMPH; The Rail line will pass through three main districts of Maharashtra, i.e. Pune, Ahmednagar and Nasik; Seamless connectivity to industrial zones of Pune and Nasik such as Alandi,Chakan, Khed, Manchar, Narayangaon, Sinnar, Satpur; Development of container depots along the rail corridor;

* Speech was laid on the Table

Development rights for proposed stations; Development of Private Freight Terminal (PFT), Dry Port, Multimodel and commercial hub, Warehouses and Siding at suggested location by local industries; Economic development due to fast track movement of cargo by Railways; This will open a new revenue stream for industries by fast track movement of cargo by Railways and Facilitating economical transportation of the industrial goods from Pune region to different part of the country as well as to ports.

This project has been pending for the last 21 years. So, it should be taken on priority.

[Translation]

***SHRI C.P. JOSHI (CHITTORGARH):** Today, Indian Railways ranks third in the world in terms of its vast network. Spread over a total length of 68,000 kilometres, around 22,000 trains are operated on this extensive railway network. Approximately 15 lakh passengers travel on it every day. Managing such a vast system of trains, tracks, bridges, signalling, telecommunications and passenger amenities, along with ensuring their safety and security, is an extremely complex task.

Under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, the Union Government has significantly increased investment in the Railways so that, while maintaining existing facilities, the growing requirements can also be adequately met. Owing to the decisions of the Modi Government, unprecedented progress has been achieved in the railway sector in Rajasthan. In this Budget, the doubling work of the Ajmer–Chittorgarh railway line has been approved for my Parliamentary Constituency. Along with this, the doubling works on the Chittorgarh–Neemuch and Neemuch–Ratlam sections are in progress. Chittorgarh Junction is considered a station that generates substantial revenue for the Railways in both passenger and freight segments. Due to the dense industrial area surrounding it, the

* Speech was laid on the Table

number of goods trains operating here is comparable to that of passenger trains. However, the Ajmer–Chittorgarh–Udaipur route and the Chittorgarh–Kota route are still single railway lines. The Ajmer–Udaipur via Chittorgarh and the Chittorgarh–Kota routes are also in the process of electrification, and the work is progressing at a rapid pace. If the doubling of the Chittorgarh–Kota route is also undertaken simultaneously, Chittorgarh will have double-line electrified connectivity in four directions. Once approval for the doubling of these routes is granted, the possibility of high-speed trains such as the Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Tejas and Vande Bharat either originating from or passing through my Parliamentary Constituency will increase, as such trains frequently operate through Ajmer, Kota and Ratlam.

The Udaipur–Haridwar train, which connects Mewar with Haridwar, is currently operated only three days a week. Because of its limited operation, thousands of pilgrims from the Mewar–Vagad region as well as from Ajmer, Jaipur and other parts of Rajasthan face considerable difficulties in travelling to Haridwar.

Moreover, people undertaking Devbhoomi darshan and for immersing the remains/ashes of the deceased in the holy river are often unable to get train availability on their intended dates. Keeping in view the religious sentiments and faith of the people,

there is an urgent need to operate this train on all seven days of the week.

The Mewar–Vagad–Malwa and Kanthal regions are interconnected, and Pratapgarh district in this region, which had long remained without railway connectivity, has been accorded approval for two survey works during the past five years. Ever since the railway survey from Mandsaur to Pratapgarh and from Pratapgarh to Banswara was initiated, the eagerness among the people of Pratapgarh to be connected by rail has grown significantly. Pratapgarh has a distinct identity owing to its art, culture, lifestyle, cuisine, natural beauty and forest wealth, and there is immense potential for tourism in the region. If this railway line is constructed, Pratapgarh will also find a prominent place on the tourism map, similar to Chittorgarh and Udaipur. I therefore submit that, based on the surveys conducted, there is an urgent need to undertake the construction of the railway line from Mandsaur to Pratapgarh and from Pratapgarh to Banswara.

Along with this, the gauge conversion work on the Mavli–Marwar railway route, which has already been approved, is not progressing due to the non-allocation of budget. If this work is taken up on a priority basis, connectivity between Mewar and Marwar will be firmly established.

Following the progress of gauge conversion on the Mavli–Bari Sadri section, approval has been granted for a new railway line from Bari Sadri to Neemuch. If this project is also accorded priority and executed expeditiously, the rail connectivity from Mavli to Neemuch will be completed.

In addition, there is a need to operate train services from the Mewar region to Amritsar and to Katra, which would enable the residents of this region to avail themselves of improved and more convenient rail facilities.

[*]**SHRI SUMEDHANAND SARASWATI (SIKAR):** Keeping in view the demands and convenience of the people of my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency, I would like to bring the following railway-related demands of the Sikar Parliamentary Constituency to the attention of the Government.

I would like to place before the Government the following railway-related demands pertaining to my Parliamentary Constituency of Sikar. Train No. 14021/14022 on the Sikar–Delhi via Loharu route should be operated regularly on a daily basis. A pit and service station should be established at Sikar. The trains that used to operate via Sikar during the metre-gauge period should be restored and run regularly via Sikar. The Sarai Rohilla Delhi–Ringas train should be extended up to Jaipur and made a daily service. An underpass should be constructed between Sikar–Churu Railway Gate No. 1 and Gate No. 2 (Jagmalpura Gate). The Aravali Express, which used to operate on the Delhi–Ahmedabad route via Ringas during the metre-gauge period, should be restored and run again via Sikar and Ringas. Trains that operated during the metre-gauge period should be reintroduced. On the Rewari–Phulera via Ringas section, new daily trains should be operated to Haridwar, Jammu Tawi, Ahmedabad, Surat and Mumbai. A daily fast

[*] Speech was laid on the Table

passenger train should be operated on the Delhi–Ajmer route via Sikar–Ringas. As the length of Platforms No. 1, 2 and 3 at Ringas Railway Station is substantial, an exit gate should be provided near Gate No. 108 ROB. The signalling system for arrival and departure of trains at Ringas Station should be re-examined. An enquiry office at Ringas Station should be located either outside the gate or near the booking office. An underpass should be constructed on the Ringas–Rewari rail section between Railway Gate No. 98C, Poladas Gate No. 97C and Kaliya Hanuman Gate. Broad-gauge trains passing via Ringas should be regularised. Express Train No. 14021/14022 should be extended from Sikar to Ajmer via Ringas and Phulera. Lastly, a permanent solution should be ensured for the problem of waterlogging in various underpasses. I further request that stoppages of Jan Shatabdi Express Train Nos. 12065 and 12066 be provided at Shri Madhopur and Renwal stations, and that Train Nos. 22949/22950 be regularised. A reservation counter should be opened at Shri Madhopur Railway Station, and a parcel booking office along with an A-category waiting room should be constructed. The existing foot overbridge at Shri Madhopur Railway Station, which does not connect Platforms No. 1 and 2 with Platforms No. 3 and 4, should be extended to connect all platforms. A tin shed should be constructed on Platform No. 2 at Neem Ka Thana. At Neem Ka Thana, separate underpasses should be

provided for ingress and egress at Gate No. 76, and the existing underpass at Gate No. 76 should be made operational. A new train should be introduced on the Ajmer–Haridwar route via Sikar–Ringas. A culvert should be constructed for movement beneath the railway line at Stone No. 220/8 near Dhani Shobhakali, Post Ranoli, Sikar. A Road Over Bridge should be constructed at Gate No. 189 at Dasa Ki Dhani. Goriya is a religiously significant station, where thousands of devotees arrive from far and wide for darshan at Jeen Mata; while retaining it as a block station, passenger amenities should be enhanced. One railway level crossing each for heavy vehicles should be sanctioned between Chaumu–Ringas, Ringas–Palsana, Palsana–Sikar, Sikar–Laxmangarh and Laxmangarh–Fatehpur. Reservation facilities, which earlier existed at almost all stations but have since been discontinued, should be restored. Further, coach position indicator boards should be installed at stations where reserved trains arrive. Passenger waiting room facilities should be improved. Retiring rooms should be constructed at Sikar and Ringas Railway Stations. The procedure relating to the MP H.O. quota should be simplified so that, upon entering the MP's code in the system, tickets are automatically confirmed from the H.O. quota. A foot overbridge should be constructed near Bagaria Bal Niketan School at Laxmangarh, as nearly 1,000 students study in this school and, in the absence of a bridge, they are compelled to

walk nearly three kilometres, which adversely affects their education. Stoppages of the Indore–Bikaner via Sikar train, the Sikar–Ganganagar train and other such trains should be provided at Palsana and Laxmangarh, and a reservation counter should be opened at Laxmangarh Railway Station. Further, an overbridge should be constructed at Laxmangarh Railway Station. Train Nos. 14055/14056, the Brahmaputra Mail, should be operated from Delhi to Jaipur via Sikar. Passenger services between Delhi and Sikar should be introduced by merging Train Nos. 74001/74004 and 59728/59729. Regular train services should be operated from Delhi–Rewari to Jaipur via Shri Madhopur and Ringas. Train Nos. 12505/12506, the North East Express, should be extended up to Ajmer. Further, stoppages of Train Nos. 19807/19808, Kota–Hisar via Loharu, and 19813/19814, Kota–Hisar via Churu, should be provided at Dahar Ke Balaji Station, Jaipur.

The Shekhawati region of Rajasthan is known for its large number of soldiers, and many people from this region are settled in the North-Eastern States. Devotees from Shekhawati regularly travel to the North-East for darshan at the Kamakhya Mata Temple, and similarly, a large number of devotees from various parts of the country visit the religious centres of Khatu Shyam ji and Salasar Balaji located in the Shekhawati region. In this context, Train Nos.

15631/15632, which currently operate between Guwahati and Jaipur only two days a week, should be operated at least five days a week and extended further up to Bikaner via Ringas and Sikar. The religious places of Khatu Shyam ji and Salasar Balaji, located in my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency of Sikar, witness the movement of crores of devotees throughout the year. I therefore request that surveys be conducted and new railway lines be laid to directly connect these religious centres with train services, so as to facilitate convenient travel for devotees.

I would like to highlight some major issues related to Sikar Junction. There is no bridge for accessing the off-side of Sikar Station, which causes inconvenience to railway staff as well as the general public; therefore, a Road Over Bridge should be constructed. A foot overbridge should be built adjacent to the existing road bridge near Sikar Railway Station. Keeping in view traffic movement, parking requirements and the presence of educational institutions, a second entry should be provided from the side of the Railway Community Hall, and a Road Over Bridge should be constructed from this second entry up to the main station building. The main entrance of the station is very narrow; therefore, separate and adequately wide entry and exit gates should be constructed. Air-conditioned waiting halls should be provided.

Considering the large number of passengers visiting nearby educational institutions and religious places such as Salasar, Khatu Shyam ji, Jeen Mata ji and Shakambhari, adequate retiring rooms should be constructed. Necessary facilities should be provided for Divyang passengers. Further, the office of the Chief Ticket Inspector should be located near the main entrance of the station so that passengers can easily approach for enquiries and other passenger-related assistance whenever required.

*DR. RAMAPATI RAM TRIPATHI (DEORIA): For the development of Deoria Sadar Railway Station, the following works are urgently required. A Road Over Bridge should be constructed on the eastern side of Deoria Sadar Station on the routes leading towards Bihar via Bhikampur Road. The Gorakhpur–Lucknow Intercity Express should be operated from Bhatni Junction. There are two water tanks at the station which are very old and in a dilapidated condition; the pipelines connected to these tanks for water supply are also old and damaged, due to which complaints regarding the non-availability of clean drinking water are frequently received from passengers. There is an urgent need to install new water tanks and replace all the connected pipelines afresh. The Station Master's office, booking office, and the waiting halls for men and women need to be air-conditioned. Platforms Nos. 1, 2 and 3 do not have adequate roofing coverage across the entire length, causing inconvenience to passengers. Whatever roofing exists was constructed around 1984 and is extremely old; during the rainy season, water leaks from several places, leading to waterlogging. It has been informed that the construction of an escalator, Foot Over Bridge and lifts has already been approved, and the foundation stone was laid by the former Union Minister and present Hon.

* Speech was laid on the Table *

Governor, Shri Kalraj Mishra; however, the work has not yet commenced, resulting in a lack of confidence among the general passengers. This work should be started at the earliest. The existing Foot Over Bridge is also old, narrow and located at one end of the platform; it should be dismantled and reconstructed as per new standards. All the railway residential quarters available at the station do not conform to the prescribed standards as per the respective posts, which has led to a sense of dissatisfaction among employees and officers. Most of these quarters are extremely old, and despite repeated repairs, they are no longer in a serviceable condition. There is an urgent need for the construction of new residential quarters. Currently, patients, passengers, individuals with disabilities, and elderly citizens face significant difficulties in navigating between Platforms Nos. 1, 2, and 3 via the Foot Over Bridge. Complaints in this regard are frequently made by their attendants. From a humanitarian point of view, addressing this issue is extremely essential.

Employees residing in the South Railway Colony are facing acute dissatisfaction due to the absence of proper approach roads for accessing markets and other essential facilities outside the colony. The roads are kutcha and urgently need to be converted into pucca roads, as these roads fall under the jurisdiction of the

Railways. The tiles laid on the station platforms and within the station premises for durability and beautification have become old and worn out; therefore, granite stone flooring should be installed in their place. On Platforms Nos. 2 and 3, there are no toilet facilities at either end for differently abled passengers or senior citizens, which is an absolute necessity. As informed by the Railway Electrical Department, the generator installed to provide power supply to the railway enquiry office during non-availability of commercial electricity is of low capacity and very old, resulting in disruption of enquiry services. There is an urgent requirement for at least one generator of a minimum capacity of 120 kVA. The officers' rest house at Deoria Sadar Station has become extremely old and dilapidated. In place of this, a new air-conditioned rest house should be constructed on the roof of the Station Superintendent's office, where sufficient space is available. At present, only two personnel are deployed in the security staff waiting room, working in 12-hour shifts. During their rest periods or leave, no staff remains on duty. Therefore, additional staff posts should be sanctioned and filled to ensure proper functioning and security.

I would like to offer the following suggestions with regard to Bhatni Junction Railway Station. In the larger public interest, the

following trains should be provided stoppages at Bhatni Junction (BTT): Amrapali Express (15707/15708), Patliputra–Lucknow Express (12529/12530), Jalpaiguri–New Delhi Express (12523/12524), Purvanchal Express (15047/15048), Dibrugarh–Chandigarh Express (15903/15904), Bapudham Express (12537/12538) and Poorn Express (11037/11038). Although the Bapudham Express and Poorn Express halt at Bhatni, tickets are not available for passengers boarding from here; therefore, ticket availability should be ensured. In the case of the Godan Express (11055/11056) running from Chhapra to Mumbai, tickets are available for three days from Chhapra, but tickets are not available for the same number of days from Gorakhpur to Mumbai; this anomaly should be rectified and ticket availability ensured. The Tapti Ganga Express (19045/19046) currently runs from Chhapra via Ballia and Azamgarh to Varanasi and onwards to Surat. It is requested that on two days, namely Saturday and Sunday, this train be operated from Chhapra via Bhatni and Mau to Varanasi and further to Surat. Further, while the ticket booking office is presently located on the southern side of the station, an additional ticket vending machine should be installed on the northern side of the station near the running route, for the convenience of passengers.

At Dudahi Railway Station, a reservation centre exists, but reservation work has come to a halt due to the absence of a reservation clerk; immediate arrangements should be made to address this issue. Trains operating from Chhapra to Gorakhpur should be provided with stoppages at Dudahi Railway Station. The Chhapra–Lucknow summer special train should be regularised with a stoppage at Tamkuhi Road (Sevarhi Station). Express train services should be arranged between Thawe Junction and Gorakhpur Junction in the morning as well as in the evening. The rest house is currently under the occupation of the police and should be vacated and made available for general passengers. There are no clean and hygienic toilet facilities for passengers, which must be urgently provided.

At Gauri Bazar, there is an urgent need for a railway underpass. There is a strong possibility that the level crossing may be closed, which would divide the market into two parts. Therefore, adequate railway infrastructure must be ensured. At Gauri Bazar Railway Station, stoppages of at least two trains are extremely necessary. Providing up and down stoppages of the Gorakhpur Intercity Express (15103) and the Bagh Express (13019) at Gauri Bazar would be of great benefit to a large number of passengers.

[English]

***SHRI RAHUL RAMESH SHEWALE (MUMBAI SOUTH-CENTRAL):** The 2020-21 budget projected a 9% growth in the total revenue, however, the credibility of this projection is not very sacrosanct, especially when we consider the fact that the revised estimates of 2019-20 have estimated a total revenue of 6% lower than the budget estimates. The inability of the Ministry to provide for accurate revenue projections, would certainly affect the expenditure projections of the Ministry, that is clearly evident from the fact that Revised Estimate of 2019-20 saw a 3% decrease in comparison to the 2019-20 budget estimate, which has affected efficiency of the Indian Railways.

The operational ratio has only seen a marginal improvement, from 97.4% (revised estimate of 2019-2020) to 96.2% budget estimate of 2020-21. Though, it is true that the Government's initiative of the Tejas train, is a good move that would aid in improving the Railways poor fortunes, it doesn't justify the reasons for why the Operational Ratio of the Railways-has consistently been higher than 90% for the past couple of years, indicating low efficiency to generate operational surplus, this is particularly

* Speech was laid on the Table

evident from the fact that both the freight and the passenger traffic have been recording a declining growth.

The Committee on Restructuring Railways had noted that the expenditure undertaken by the Ministry to fund the expenditure on staff has been disproportionately high and unmanageable, I would like to suggest to the Government to separate pension spending from the rest of the revenue expenditure. As it is a non-productive expenditure, we must in all ministries separate it from salary and capital expenditures.

I would also like to know from Hon'ble Minister of Railways to state the reasons for as to why, the Depreciation Reserve Fund’s resources have been transferred to the Rail Sanraksha Kosh, especially when the Standing Committee on Railways has noted that such a transfer does not allow for replacement and repair of depreciating assets.

I would also like to bring to the notice of the Government, the urgent needs in my constituency Mumbai South Central. Hon'ble Minister should take into account the following issues: The Ministry should undertake measures to develop a closed circuit corridor of the Mumbai suburban railway, it would ensure a substantial reduction in accidents; Setting up of the CBPC signaling services have not been completed yet. It should be completed with

immediate effect; Development of an underpass from Matunga East to Matunga West; Development of Dadar railway station as a smart station; Development of Kurla railway station as smart station; Increasing the number of AC locals, alongwith a decrease in the cost of tickets. In order to ensure that people of all income groups get access to comfortable travel; Consider operating one to three coaches in a semi-air conditioned locomotive rather than operating an entire AC locals; Like the normal local, the air-conditioned local should have a separate compartment or space for the disabled persons; if you are looking at air-conditioned fares, this arrangement should be best suited to those locals, just like the first class in general coaches; and passengers have expressed their displeasure over the cancellation of the general locals rounds and the starting AC local round instead. Eighty to Ninety percent, of passengers demanded that AC locals can be run as an additional or new rounds.

| urge upon the Government to consider my suggestions keeping in view the difficulty faced by the commuters of Mumbai locals and also keep in touch with the MCGM to repair and construction of more and more foot over bridges at the areas adjacent to Railway Stations in Mumbai and Suburban.

*SHRI B. MANICKAM TAGORE (VIRUDHUNAGAR): Sir, kindly regularise the Silambu Express from Chennai to Aruppukottai, Virudhunagar, Sivakasi. This was introduced by 2013 as weekly train but after seven years also its thrice weekly. Kindly make Silambu Express as daily.

* Speech was laid on the Table *

[*]**DR. SUBHAS SARKAR (BANKURA):** I am keeping few humble submissions on Demands for Grants in Railways for mobilization of freight traffic, there should not be cancellation of passenger train in Adra Division; Link train to avail Agnibina Express from Adra to Asansole; To increase Reservation Quota for Bankura Station (District Sadar) in (i) Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Express and s(ii) Howrah Lokmanya Tilak Samarsata Express; Masagram Station – connectivity with Eastern Railway for trains from Bankura to Masagram.

[*] Speech was laid on the Table

***SHRI HAJI FAZLUR REHMAN (SAHARANPUR):** In my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency, there is no Express train from Saharanpur to Delhi between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and similarly, there is no Express train between 5 p.m. and midnight, which causes considerable inconvenience to passengers. Therefore, two new Express trains should be introduced on this route.

There is also no train service from Deoband to the North-Eastern States, nor to Bihar and Bengal. A train should be operated from Deoband, as a large number of students from various States pursue their education at Darul Uloom Deoband and face serious difficulties in travelling to the North-Eastern States due to the absence of direct rail connectivity.

Further, a new railway line should be constructed and train services operated between Saharanpur and Dehradun via Gangoh, Chhutmalpur, Biharigarh and Sundarpur. This would provide convenience to devotees visiting the religious shrine of Shakumbhari Devi as well as to tourists travelling to Uttarakhand. Additionally, new daily train services should be introduced from Saharanpur to Lucknow and Prayagraj.

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

*__SHRI RAMESH CHANDER KAUSHIK (SONIPAT):__ A new railway line from Jind to Hansi is to be constructed, for which the Government of Haryana has agreed to bear 50 percent of the expenditure. I therefore request that this work be commenced at the earliest. For the convenience of passengers, ATM machines should be installed at Sonipat Railway Station and Jind Junction in my Parliamentary Constituency. Railway authorities, in coordination with the Municipal Council, have developed parks on vacant railway land at Ganaur and Sonipat. On the same pattern, parks should also be developed on other vacant railway land in collaboration with the Railways and the Municipal Council. Stoppages of Train Nos. 19717 (Up) and 19718 (Down) should be provided at Julana Railway Station. A new railway line of approximately 80 kilometres has been constructed in my Parliamentary Constituency, covering Jind, Gohana and Sonipat, and passing through ten villages; a halt station should be constructed at Rudana village on this line so that the people of my constituency may benefit. I also request that escalator facilities be provided at the railway stations in my Parliamentary Constituency.

I request that stoppage of Train Nos. 14717/14718, operating between Hisar and Haridwar, be provided at Gohana Railway

* Speech was laid on the Table

Station. An underpass should be constructed at Railway Gate No. C-34. On the road connecting Panchhi village to Rajpur, there is a railway crossing where construction of an underpass is extremely necessary, as this road serves as an important route for several villages such as Mahra, Purkhas Udeshipur and others. Farmers from these villages also use this road for transporting their agricultural produce. At village Hullaheri, a railway crossing or underpass should be constructed to enable safe passage across the railway line. The Sonipat–Gohana railway line passes through Hullaheri village, and approximately 250 acres of agricultural land belonging to the village lie on the other side of the railway track. As no level crossing or underpass has been provided on this section, farmers and residents are facing severe hardship. Therefore, the construction of a railway crossing or underpass at this location is absolutely essential. I also request that a stoppage of the Garib Rath Express be provided at Gohana Railway Station. For public convenience, stoppages of Train No. 11902 (Kurukshetra–Mathura) and Train No. 11901 (Mathura–Kurukshetra) should be provided at Ganaur. Stoppages of Train Nos. 19717 (Up) and 19718 (Down) should be provided at Julana Railway Station, and a platform shed should also be constructed there. A new railway station should be established at Chhabri village. A bridge should be constructed on the Julana–Dohar railway line. A park should be

developed near the railway line on Rohtak Road. Jind Railway Station should be upgraded. Further, between Guru Mandi and the goods yard on the Ambala railway line, a dedicated passage should be constructed for pedestrians as well as for two-wheelers such as bicycles, scooters and motorcycles. This should be done.

Train No. 14626, earlier known as the Chhindwara Express, used to arrive at Tohana at 7.53 a.m., but its timing has now been changed to 8.18 a.m. If this train is restored to its earlier schedule, passengers would be able to reach their destinations earlier. After Trains 54036 and 15610, there is no morning train service, and the timing of Train No. 19024, which earlier arrived at 8.32 a.m., has now been shifted to 8.58 a.m. Due to this delay, passengers of this train are unable to connect at Narwana with Train No. 54040, the Jind–Kurukshetra Passenger, and consequently also miss connections from Jind to Panipat. I therefore request that the timings of Train Nos. 14626 and 19024 be restored to their earlier schedules in the interest of passenger convenience.

Train No. 54056 (DJAJ) departs from Tohana at 5.00 a.m. and reaches Narwana at 5.32 a.m., whereas Train No. 54038, running from Jind to Kurukshetra, departs Jind at 4.15 a.m. and leaves Narwana at 5.03 a.m. As a result, passengers travelling from Tohana to Kurukshetra miss this connection at Narwana and are compelled to continue their journey from Narwana to Kurukshetra

by bus or other means. I therefore request that the schedules of Train Nos. 54036 and 54038 be coordinated at Narwana Junction to facilitate convenient passenger connections.

I also request that a stoppage of Train Nos. 12481/12482, the Shri Ganganagar–Delhi Intercity Express, be provided at Tohana, as there is no daytime train available from Tohana for travel to Ganganagar.

I request that stoppages of Train Nos. 12421/12422 and 12485/12486, the Nanded Express, be provided at Tohana. The Sikh community in the surrounding areas considers it essential to pay obeisance at Dhamtan Sahib Gurudwara before proceeding to Shri Hazur Sahib, and Dhamtan Sahib is located close to Tohana Railway Station. If these trains are given a stoppage at Tohana, it will greatly facilitate the Sikh devotees. Further, there is an urgent need to introduce a new train from Delhi to Amritsar via Rohtak, Jind, Tohana and Jakhal. I also request that the Hisar–Haridwar trains, namely 14715 (Up), 14716 (Down), 14717 (Up) and 14718 (Down), be provided with stoppages at Gohana in my Parliamentary Constituency of Sonipat.

On the newly laid Jind–Sonipat–Jind railway line passing near village Chhabri, a new railway station should be constructed at Chhabri village, as it is centrally located among several villages and

is connected to all surrounding villages by pucca roads. If a railway station is established here, residents of all these villages will benefit, as a large number of people commute daily from these villages to Sonipat and Delhi. Further, I wish to submit that Ganaur, which falls within my Parliamentary Constituency of Sonipat, is a sub-divisional town with several prominent religious places such as Satkumbh, Sant Nirankari Mandal, Guru Maa Ashram and Gupti Sagar Dham, along with numerous educational institutions. Additionally, an Asia-level table market is proposed to be established there. In view of these factors, I request that Train Nos. 11901 (Up) and 11902 (Down), the Geeta Jayanti Express, be provided with a stoppage at Ganaur Railway Station. I request that all the above demands be fulfilled at the earliest in the interest of the people of my Parliamentary Constituency.

[English]

***SHRI C.N. ANNADURAI (TIRUVANNAMALAI):** Tiruvannamalai, being the religious town, attracts lakhs of pilgrims round the year. The nearest Airport is Chennai. Tiruvannamalai Railway Station is more than 125 years old. Modernisation of the Railway Station is need of the hour. There is no direct train between capital city of Chennai and Temple city of Tiruvannamalai.

New Railway-line from Tindivaram to Tiruvannamalai is under construction for the last eight years but the progress work is very low. Adequate funds may be allotted to expediting the work. There is no halt of Howrah-Pudducherry Express Train at Tiruvannamalai.

I request the Hon'ble Railway Minister to take quick action for development of rail connectivity to Tiruvannamalai. A daily Intercity express from Chennai to Tiruvannamalai may be introduced immediately.

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* Speech was laid on the Table

[Translation]

***SHRI RAMPRIT MANDAL (JHANJHARPUR):** I represent the Jhanjharpur Parliamentary Constituency of the State of Bihar. Khajauli and Rajnagar Railway Stations are located in my Parliamentary Constituency. In the public interest, it is necessary to provide stoppages of the following trains at these two stations. The Janaki Express, Train No. 15284 (Up and Down), should be given stoppages at both Khajauli and Rajnagar Railway Stations. The Jaynagar–Patliputra Intercity Express, Train No. 15549, should also be provided with stoppages at Khajauli and Rajnagar Stations. The Ganga Sagar Express, Train No. 13186 (Up and Down), should be given a stoppage at Khajauli Railway Station. It may be noted that the Ganga Sagar Express already has a one-minute stoppage at Rajnagar. Further, the gauge conversion work on the Jhanjharpur–Laukaha section is progressing at a very slow pace and needs to be expedited. I do not wish to say much more and, with these demands, I extend my support to the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Railways for the year 2020–21.

* Speech was laid on the Table

***DR. ALOK KUMAR SUMAN (GOPALGANJ):** Indian Railways is regarded as the lifeline of the nation, as it is the most convenient and widely available means of transport for the common people. The Hon. Minister, Shri Goyal ji, is making every possible effort to promote development in the Railways, and I congratulate him for the same.

I represent the Gopalganj Parliamentary Constituency of Bihar, which is a relatively backward State, and I wish to place before the House certain railway-related problems and aspirations of the common people of my constituency. I hope that these will be given due consideration and appropriate action will be taken. The Vaishali Express (Train Nos. 12553/12554), the Bihar Sampark Kranti Express (Train Nos. 12565/12566), and the Naharlagun–Anand Vihar Express (Train Nos. 22411/22412) should be diverted via Chhapra–Gopalganj–Thawe and operated up to New Delhi. The Gorakhdham Express, which currently runs from New Delhi to Gorakhpur, should be extended further up to Chhapra via Thawe and Gopalganj. An Intercity Express service should be operated between Gopalganj–Thawe and Patna. Further, the number of Passenger trains between Gopalganj–Thawe and Siwan should be

* Speech was laid on the Table

increased in order to meet public demand and improve local connectivity.

***SHRI ASHOK MAHADEORAO NETE (GADCHIROLI-CHIMUR):** I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji, and the Hon. Finance Minister, Shrimati Nirmala Sitharaman ji, because this Budget appears distinct and unconventional, focusing not on populist announcements but on agriculture and farmers, as well as on the poor and the middle class.

In the Budget, the Hon. Finance Minister has made provisions for improving passenger amenities in trains and for developing railway stations on the lines of airports. The announcement to develop four railway stations under the PPP model is particularly welcome.

It is also a matter of satisfaction that this Budget provides for the generation of electricity by installing solar power plants on vacant railway land along railway tracks. The Railways has identified about 5,000 hectares of land for this purpose, where solar plants can be set up to generate up to 10,000 megawatts of electricity.

The Hon. Finance Minister has stated in the Budget that the Railways has begun work on a plan to operate trains across the country to transport perishable commodities such as milk, curd,

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

vegetables, fruits and meat to all parts of the nation. The Railways is already working on this plan as a pilot project through a cold-chain mechanism.

The Hon. Finance Minister has allocated budgetary support of Rs. 70,000 crore to the Railways in the Union Budget and has provided for a total capital expenditure of Rs. 1.61 lakh crore for the Railways during the year, which represents an increase of 3 Percent over the capital expenditure provision of the current financial year.

In the financial year 2019–20, capital expenditure of Rs. 1.56 lakh crore was earmarked, which was 17.2 Percent higher than that of 2018–19. Compared to the Revised Estimates of 2019–20, the Budget Estimates for 2020–21 have set a target of an overall 9.5 Percent increase in revenue from passenger fares, freight charges, other sources and income of the Railway Recruitment Board. In the Budget 2020–21, allocations have been made of Rs. 12,000 crore for laying new railway lines, Rs. 2,250 crore for gauge conversion, Rs. 700 crore for doubling of lines, Rs. 5,786.97 crore for railway coaches and locomotives, and Rs. 1,650 crore for signalling and telecommunications. These provisions are indeed commendable.

My Parliamentary Constituency of Gadchiroli–Chimur falls within a highly backward, tribal-dominated and remote region.

There are certain important issues pertaining to this area which require budgetary provision for their resolution. The Government of Maharashtra has submitted proposals to the Union Government for the early implementation of projects related to the Wadsa–Gadchiroli and Nagpur–Nagbhid railway lines in the tribal-dominated Gadchiroli region, which is severely affected by Naxalism. For the construction of these railway lines in Naxal-affected areas, the Government of Maharashtra has proposed to bear 50 Percent of the expenditure through the Ministry of Home Affairs, 25 Percent through the Ministry of Railways, and the remaining 25 Percent by the State Government itself.

The Wadsa–Gadchiroli railway line, located in a tribal and Naxal-affected area, was approved in the year 2011–12 and has a total length of 49.5 kilometres. The revised cost estimate for this project has already been approved by the Railway Board, and the final location survey as well as the geotechnical survey have been completed. Similarly, the Nagpur–Nagbhid gauge conversion project, covering a distance of 106 kilometres, was approved in the Budget Speech of 2012–13. A revised estimate for this project, including electrification, has also been prepared. However, despite these approvals and completed preparatory work, no budgetary allocation has been made so far for either of these projects.

Therefore, adequate budgetary allocations should be made to expedite the construction of the above-mentioned two railway lines in this severely Naxal-affected region, where work is currently progressing at a very slow pace. Fast-tracking these projects will help promote regional development, address the problem of Naxalism, and enable the youth of the area to join the national mainstream.

In Gadchiroli district, Wadsa, and in Gondia district, Amgaon, the railway stations are of great importance. However, due to the absence of road overbridges (ROBs) across the railway lines, road traffic remains disrupted for long periods. Several important trains pass through these stations, and local residents have been demanding the construction of overbridges for a long time. Therefore, budgetary provisions should be made on a priority basis for the construction of overbridges at the Wadsa and Amgaon railway crossings.

In the tribal parliamentary constituency of Gadchiroli, particularly in Gondia district under the Deori–Amgaon Assembly segment, there has been a long-pending demand from the local population for the operation of a DEMU (shuttle) train from Gondia to Durg via Amgaon, Salekasa, and Dongargarh, along with the introduction of two additional passenger trains operating after 12 noon. Despite this demand being raised repeatedly over a long

period, it has not yet been approved. As a result, the local residents are facing significant difficulties in daily travel, leading to widespread inconvenience and growing dissatisfaction among the people. I have already brought this issue to the attention of the authorities through written correspondence and have also raised it in the House.

Therefore, keeping in view the special needs and challenges of this tribal-dominated region, I urge that early approval be granted for the operation of a DEMU (shuttle) train between Gondia and Durg via Amgaon, Salekasa, and Dongargarh, along with two additional passenger trains to run after 12 noon, so that the economically weaker population of this predominantly tribal area may receive much-needed relief and improved access to transportation facilities.

In the Deori–Amgaon Assembly segment of Gondia district, which falls under the Gadchiroli parliamentary constituency, several rounds of discussions have already taken place between Railway officials, State Government officials, and public representatives regarding the grant of consent for the construction of an approximately 1.5-kilometre road at Dhanoli. I have also raised this matter earlier in the House. However, despite these discussions, the Railways have not yet granted consent to the State Government, resulting in unnecessary delay in the construction of

this road. Once consent is granted by the Railways, the State Government is fully prepared to undertake the construction of this road, which would significantly benefit the local population by reducing their travel distance by nearly 25 kilometres.

Therefore, I request that Railway consent be accorded at the earliest for the construction of the said 1.5-kilometre road at Dhanoli, enabling the State Government to proceed with the work and substantially ease travel for the people of the region.

Approval has been granted for the conversion of the Gadchiroli–Wadsa railway line to Broad Gauge in this region. However, no funds have yet been allocated for land acquisition and construction, due to which the execution of this project is facing unnecessary delays.

Secondly, for the overall development of this region, fund allocation is also required for conducting surveys for the proposed new railway lines: Gadchiroli–Ashti–Allapalli–Sironcha–Mancherial–Adilabad and Nagbhid–Kampa–Tampa–Chimur–Warora. Therefore, along with the early allocation of funds for land acquisition and construction for converting the Gadchiroli–Wadsa railway line to Broad Gauge, which is located in a severely Naxal-affected area, funds should also be allocated for surveys of the above-mentioned new railway lines. I humbly request that all the

above projects in the tribal district of Gadchiroli be granted early approval, and that appropriate steps be taken to ensure the availability of water for irrigation, which will contribute to development in Naxal-affected areas.

Finally, I strongly support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Railways, express my gratitude to the Government, and sincerely hope that the above-mentioned issues related to my parliamentary constituency will be considered sympathetically, and that appropriate steps will be taken to allocate funds for their resolution.

[English]

*__DR. LORHO PFOZE (OUTER MANIPUR):__ Whereas, the Diphu-Peren-Karong 123kms Railway Project originating from Assam to Manipur via Nagaland was conceived during the regime when visionary leader Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was Prime Minister of India; and the foundation stone was laid at Karong by the then Minister for Railways Shri Nitish Kumar on 10th Dec.1998. However, the project has since been shelved and nothing known about progress of the much publicized dream of people of the region.

Later, during UPA-I the Government of Manipur in 2003-04 decided to realign the railway connection to Manipur via Jiribam—Tupul—Imphal hence, crushing the hopes of the people in Senapati District in Manipur, Peren District in Nagaland and Karbi Anglong District in Assam. The foundation stone for this new railway project was laid by the then Hon'ble Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 20th Nov 2004 and the Jiribam—Tupul section is slated to be completed by 2019, but now rescheduled to 2022.

Nevertheless, if the "Diphu-Karong" project is taken up, much development would take place, provide job opportunity to thousands of young men and women and brought them to the main

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* Speech was laid on the Table *

stream, improve trade and commerce as well as connect the people of these Hill Tract Tribal Districts, would have progressed and come nearer to the rest of the country and establish National integration.

It is my earnest request that, Hon'ble Minister for Railways will kindly seriously look into the matter and revive the Diphu—Karong railway project for the up-keep of Shri Atalji's commitment and the sense of deprivation and alienation by the Hilly Tribal People be done away with. The new Project Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal when completed, can further be connected to Imphal — Karong (60kms) and Karong—Zubza (60kms) and Zubza-Dimapur railheads in Nagaland and further Karong—Peren—Diphu could be connected hence fulfilling the dreams of the people of Manipur, Nagaland and Assam.

The Railway Budget 2020-21 is visionary and will go a long way bringing connectivity and development to the country. And I support the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): Hon. Speaker Sir, this discussion began yesterday afternoon at 1.00 p.m. I, too, was listening with great enthusiasm to the views expressed by all Hon. Members in the House. Yesterday, throughout the day and until midnight at 12.00, nearly 98 Members placed their respective views before the House. Today, when Shri Adhir Ranjan ji spoke, the number reached 99 Members, and now I stand before the House as the hundredth speaker. I do not know whether I should call it a coincidence or something else, but last year as well, when we were holding the debate, there were 99 speakers, and I happened to be the 100th speaker then too, by some coincidence. Yesterday, when the count reached 98, I felt perhaps one speaker might be missing, but fortunately, fevicol did not work, and therefore we had the opportunity to listen to the 99th speaker as well. I would request my friend Shri Adhir Ranjan ji to kindly listen to my remarks too.

Sir, I take immense pride in our more than 13 lakh railway employees. Working tirelessly day and night, they operate thousands of passenger and freight trains every single day, serving people from every corner of the country, and remain constantly alert even under the most challenging circumstances. I am pleased to

inform the House that after the House adjourned last night at 12.00 midnight, my colleague Minister Shri Suresh Angadi and the officers carefully noted each and every point raised by Hon. Members. What I hold in my hands today is a response to every single intervention made by the 98 Members who spoke yesterday. From last night until 10.30 this morning, they worked continuously to prepare this comprehensive reply and placed it before me. I do not know, but if I have your permission, I can continue responding even until midnight today, because I have brought with me replies to all 98 Members. Our officers worked through the night to accomplish this, and I believe all of us as Members of Parliament will truly appreciate this effort. Perhaps Hon. Members may recall that last year as well, on 11 and 12 July 2019, several Members had placed their views before the House. On that occasion, 183 Members participated, and many speeches were also laid on the table in written form. Today, I am happy to inform the House that among the 99 MPs who participated in the Rail Budget discussion and the 84 MPs who laid their submissions on the table, each intervention contained three, four, five or even six different issues. We have provided individual written replies to every single one of them and sent these responses to each Hon. Member.

Even now, the issues that have been raised. … *(Interruptions)*

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY (PALI): Replies have also been prepared for those who laid their submissions on the table.

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Yes, replies have been prepared for those as well. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Please give a positive reply, not a negative one.

[Translation]

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Suresh ji, I heard yesterday that the Hon. Speaker Sir mentioned that you are a seven-term MP. If the same positivity had been reflected during the 60–65 years of your governance, the Railways would not have been in the condition in which we found it in the year 2014. … (*Interruption*s) The Railways are, in a sense, the lifeline of the nation. They connect every corner of the country. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Kamrup to Kutch, if there is one single link that binds the nation together in every respect, it is the Indian Railways. This is a heritage of 165 years. Indeed, many eminent personalities have been associated with this great institution. Even Mahatma Gandhi undertook his travels entirely by rail during the freedom movement, as he journeyed across the country. Be it Lal Bahadur Shastri ji, George Fernandes ji, Madhu Dandavate ji, or Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, who

presided over a station masters' union for many years, all these great leaders have shown the way. Walking on the path shown by them, it has been the consistent desire of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji that the Railways should emerge as a medium of change, a medium of transformation, and make a significant contribution towards national progress.

Indeed, I would like to share with all of you that from time to time I get the opportunity to discuss with him what needs to be done. The kind of innovative ideas and alternative thinking that he places before us as suggestions are never presented as directives. They are always offered in the spirit of guidance. Only someone who has experienced the Railways closely from childhood, who has worked at railway stations and understood first-hand the challenges on both sides, can do this. He has personally experienced the difficulties faced by the Railways as an organisation, by railway workers and labourers, and by passengers across the country. Truly, the manner in which he provides guidance even on the smallest of issues, and the way he constantly encourages all of us to think afresh and think differently, reflects a fundamental change in mindset. This transformation in thinking has been brought about by Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi over the last five to five and a

half years. Today, I would like to place before this august House a few glimpses of that transformative vision.

Mahatma Gandhi too had told us, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” I believe that over the past five and a half years, this Government has not turned its face away from any problem. We have confronted problems head-on and have focused on finding solutions to them. I was just recalling that very recently we took a small but significant step. Governments have come and gone, and the Railways has been functioning for so many years, yet it never occurred to anyone that there were so many separate helplines within the Railways. If your linen was not in order, there was one helpline. If you were troubled by cleanliness in the train, there was another helpline. If there was a law and order issue, there was yet another helpline. In this manner, as many as seven different helplines were operating for seven different purposes. Frankly, even I did not know the numbers of those helplines, so how could passengers possibly be expected to know them?

One day, the Hon. Prime Minister asked me whether all these helplines could be merged into a single one. It genuinely struck me then how simple and yet how powerful that idea was. After all, in the 165-year history of the Railways, it had never occurred to anyone to ask why there should not be a single helpline and a robust,

unified control point. I am pleased to inform this House, and I suspect this may be true for many of us as well, that most people were not even aware of the helpline numbers on which complaints could be registered and through which their problems could be resolved.

Today, if you report any issue by dialling the 139 helpline number, your complaint is attended to immediately and steps are taken to resolve it. Even matters relating to security can be reported on 139, which we then pass on to the Railway Protection Force and the Government Railway Police. However, for security-related concerns, we have also introduced a separate helpline, 182, to ensure a swift and prompt security response. Thus, 139 is for all general complaints and 182 is dedicated exclusively to security. The question, however, is why this did not occur to anyone for so many years. This is because it is the Hon. Prime Minister who, over the past five to five and a half years, has transformed the very way of thinking within the Railways. Through initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the Fit India Movement, a strong focus on women's safety, the promotion of Swadeshi, encouraging increased production within India so that we are not dependent on foreign countries, and India's sensitive and committed efforts towards reducing pollution, protecting the environment, and leading the

fight against climate change, this Government has laid sustained emphasis on these priorities. As a result, the overall mindset and functioning of the Railways have undergone a fundamental transformation during this period. I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister, the Hon. Finance Minister, and all Hon. Members as well, because at different times you meet me and provide valuable suggestions, which continue to guide and strengthen our efforts. When any issue is brought before me, it becomes clear that it is not merely the problem of one Member; the same issue exists in the Parliamentary Constituencies of other Members as well. Learning from such experiences, I would like to share a few glimpses of how we have brought about change. First of all, all of you will recall a time when, if you recommended any work, you would receive a reply stating that it could not be undertaken due to a lack of funds. After all, where did the Railways have the money? Reference has just been made to the separate Railway Budget. What was that separate budget? It was nothing more than a balloon. A budget would be presented that drew loud applause in the House, filled with political announcements, and people would be misled election after election. Time would pass with claims that a line had been sanctioned, that it had been included in the Pink Book, and that a survey would now be conducted. In this manner, one election would be won merely on the basis of an

announcement, another election would pass with the project being included in the Pink Book, and by the next election we would claim that the survey had been completed. By the fourth election, land acquisition would finally begin. Hon. Speaker Sir, in this way, there are projects today that were initiated even before the Emergency in 1974, yet they have not been completed till date. This unfortunate situation was the outcome of a separate Railway Budget and a purely political budget. … (*Interruption*s) Under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the investment made and the resources allocated for investment over the past five years have increased by nearly two and a half times. You will be pleased to know that in 2013–14, the Railways received only Rs. 54,000 crore. In the current Budget, the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister have approved capital expenditure of Rs. 1,61,000 crore for the Railways. When this threefold increase in funding became available, there had to be a clear pathway for its utilisation. Earlier, the approach was to run nearly 500 projects simultaneously, allocating Rs. 10 crore here, Rs. 20 crore there, or Rs. 25–50 crore elsewhere. That mindset was changed. We identified 58 super-critical projects, completion of which would either decongest major routes, add significant capacity, or result in full electrification of entire links. In different cases, this enabled a substantial increase in coal and freight movement as well.

After undertaking such detailed studies, as Shri Adhir Ranjan Ji was referring to in the context of demand and supply, we identified 58 super-critical and 68 critical projects, and ensured that the bulk of the funding was directed towards those projects where land was already available, environmental clearances had been obtained, all requisite facilities were in place, there were no court stay orders, and where work could be expedited and completed swiftly so that these projects could be dedicated to public service. Through this focused approach and concentrated effort, it becomes evident that the pace of work has increased substantially, and the scale of achievements and outcomes has been remarkably significant. Shri Adhir Ranjan Ji made a brief observation regarding the targets set and the achievements realised. Shri Adhir Ranjan Ji, the defining strength and hallmark of this Government is the clear directive of the Hon. Prime Minister that targets should be set in a manner that may initially appear impossible, but should inspire every individual to put in their utmost effort to achieve them. … (*Interruption*s) In that pursuit, in that passion to achieve those goals, even if we do not reach one hundred Percent of the target, we make such a decisive leap forward that the very act of striving brings about transformational change on a very large scale.

I will cite just one example, because it was referred to in this House only this morning, namely electrification. I recall that in the year 2013–14, approximately six hundred, six hundred and twenty-five, or at most six hundred and fifty kilometres of new track or railway lines were electrified. Shri Adhir Ranjan Ji appeared distressed that we had set a target of 6,000 kilometres and achieved 5,200 kilometres. However, the fact that we progressed from 600 kilometres to 5,200 kilometres did not figure in his assessment at all. How could it, because according to him I am misleading the House. But figures speak the truth, and figures cannot mislead anyone. … (*Interruption*s)

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: I have presented the figures. They are Railway data. … (*Interruption*s)

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: From 600 to 5,200. Had such a leap been achieved during your time, perhaps the country would not have had to witness the present state of affairs, nor would our passengers and the Railways have had to endure such conditions today.

Recently, there was also a reference to the operating ratio. Of course, Shri Adhir Ranjan Ji, you have entangled yourself with the wrong person on matters of accountancy and figures. Now, many of us here come from the private sector, and several Chartered Accountants are also present in this House. We all understand that

for any well-run organisation, it is only natural that employees will retire, and upon retirement, pensions must be paid. What do responsible institutions do? They create a pension fund, and every year they set aside a certain amount into that pension fund, invest it in instruments such as LIC policies or bonds, allow it to grow gradually, and thereby build the capacity to disburse pensions from that fund. When we assumed office in 2014 and examined the situation, we found that the amount available with the Railways in the pension fund was woefully inadequate. For years, the necessary provisioning that should have been made to build up the pension fund for meeting pension liabilities had simply not been done at all. This is a very basic actuarial calculation. One creates a pension fund, takes the assistance of an actuary to determine how much needs to be set aside each year, and invests it through LIC or other appropriate instruments so that pensions can be paid automatically every year. But when for years together a family or a party continues to run governments and fails to make any provision whatsoever for pensions. … *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: This should not be said. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Very well, let us assume that one party ran the government. Had adequate provisioning been made for

pensions, then the fact that annual pension expenditure has risen in recent years from Rs. 30,000 crore to Rs. 50,000 crore would not have escaped notice. This is an amount that the Government is paying, that the Railways are paying. When the burden of the Seventh Pay Commission fell upon the Railways and there was a direct increase of 12–13 Percent in recurring expenditure, that too had to be borne by the Railways. I would like to ask my friends in the Opposition, and those who have made comments on this subject, whether they want railway fares to be increased by 60–70 Percent.

That burden should not be placed upon the public. In the Railways, such matters must be addressed gradually and in a calibrated manner. Keeping the problems of the people in view, revenues should be built up steadily and systematically. I firmly believe that the Modi Government has consistently remained concerned that the public should never be subjected to an undue burden, and it will continue to do so in the future as well. Whenever required, it does take steps to bring about a modest increase in revenue, but at the same time it remains fully mindful of public interest. It reviews problems carefully and works towards finding appropriate solutions.

Questions were also raised here regarding why the Railway Budget was merged. I believe the greatest benefit of this step is that the era of these fictitious announcements has come to an end.

Today, Hon. Members come to me and say that their project is mentioned in the Pink Book, that it is a sanctioned project. I would like to inform the Hon. Members that merely announcing a project earlier, without making any budgetary provision for it, meant that in reality it remained only an announcement under the earlier system. After surveys, even announcements that may have been well intentioned were made decades ago. Someone comes and says that an announcement was made 30 years ago, someone else says 40 years ago, and in the meantime the project cost has increased fivefold. Just now, you yourself were seeking information about a project from your own area.

For the benefit of Hon. Members, I have also brought these papers with me. These contain detailed information on all projects in West Bengal. You may take them from me, and I can also lay them on the table of the House. When I place the details of any project before you, you will be surprised. Land has to be provided by the State Government. The Railways cannot acquire land on its own. If land is not available, a railway line cannot be constructed in the air, without land. … (*Interruption*s) Shri Suresh Ji was very concerned. … (*Interruption*s) Shri Suresh Ji was particularly worried that projects in Kerala were not being taken up. You too had told me yesterday that I should be concerned. I have compiled all the projects of Kerala as well. This is the list of projects in

Kerala, showing where land has not been made available and where cooperation has not been forthcoming. These are the letters I have written to the Chief Minister, requesting assistance so that land may be provided. The moment land is made available, we will immediately take up the projects. Similarly, letters written to every Chief Minister are available here. Any Hon. Member who wishes to take copies pertaining to his or her State may do so. … (*Interruption*s) I would like to assure the House that whichever State extends cooperation in land acquisition, and for whichever project one hundred Percent of the land is made available, the Railways is fully committed and fully prepared to take responsibility for executing that project at an accelerated pace and to implement it swiftly.

I would like to place before the House an example of a project in Uttarakhand in this context. In Uttarakhand, there is a railway project of great importance, a project that has been discussed several times in this House, and on which many Hon. Members have expressed their views. I am pleased to inform the House how effectively the Government of Uttarakhand has worked in close coordination with the Railways. The Rishikesh–Karnaprayag railway line is a highly significant railway project. I believe the entire House will agree on its importance. It is a 125-kilometre line which, in due course, will connect the Char Dham and provide

convenient access for pilgrims to all four shrines. This line constitutes the first crucial link in that direction. For this new railway line, the Government of Uttarakhand has made available one hundred Percent of the required land to the Railways. It has also ensured one hundred Percent forest clearance wherever required. As a result, we have been able to expedite work on this project. Construction activity is currently underway along 105 kilometres of this line.

13.00 hrs

This project involves approximately 17 tunnels. It is a highly difficult alignment. There are 17 major bridges, of which four are over the Ganga and the Alaknanda. About 790 hectares of land has been utilised. I am giving this example to demonstrate that when States extend cooperation and all necessary permissions are obtained, we are able to accelerate a project at a rapid pace. This project stands as a living example of that approach.

In the same manner, when Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi turned his attention towards Purvanchal, he assessed the prevailing conditions there and recognised how such an important region had been neglected for decades. He directed all of us Ministers to accord special focus to Purvanchal. I am pleased to inform the House that over the past five years, gauge conversion

work covering 972 kilometres has been completed in Purvanchal, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the hill States.

At present, among the seven North-Eastern States, the Seven Sisters, and indeed among all eight States, railway lines have reached every State except Sikkim. Work for Sikkim is also progressing at a rapid pace. To connect Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, the 22-kilometre Harmuti–Naharlagun line was commissioned in February 2015. To connect Manipur, the Silchar–Jiribam line was commissioned in May 2016. In Mizoram, the 85-kilometre Katakhal–Bairabi line was commissioned in March 2016 to connect Bairabi. In May 2016, the Agartala–Tripura line was converted from metre gauge to broad gauge. The 110-kilometre Agartala–Sabroom line was commissioned recently in October 2019. Meghalaya was also connected to the rail network in November 2014 through the Dudhnai–Mendipathar line. All Hon. Members are aware of how the Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge had remained stalled for many years. With the completion of the Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge in December 2018, the travel time between Naharlagun and Dibrugarh has been reduced dramatically from 24 hours to just 5 hours.

In the same sequence, we are advancing several new National railway line projects in the North-Eastern region at a rapid pace.

These include the 98-kilometre Jiribam–Imphal project, which will connect the capital of Manipur; the 51-kilometre Bairabi–Sairang project, which will connect the capital of Mizoram; the 44-kilometre Sivok–Rangpo project, which will connect the capital of Sikkim; and the 88-kilometre Dimapur–Kohima project, which will connect the capital of Nagaland. In addition, the 21-kilometre Tetelia–Byrnihat project and the 108-kilometre Byrnihat–Shillong project will, in due course, connect Meghalaya as well. There are certain issues on the Byrnihat–Shillong stretch, but I am pleased to state that my young Chief Minister friend there is extending full cooperation. We are engaging with student unions and other stakeholders and are actively working towards resolving those issues.

Today, I am pleased to place an important piece of information before the House. As all Hon. Members are aware, due to prolonged tension in Kashmir, work on the Chenab Bridge project had been progressing at a very slow pace for many years. In the meantime, owing to certain PILs before the Supreme Court, work on this project was stalled for several years. This involves extensive tunnelling, major bridge construction, and constitutes a highly critical link. It is a 111-kilometre rail link connecting Banihal to Baramulla in Kashmir.

Hon. Speaker Sir, the railway bridge being constructed over the Chenab will be the highest railway bridge in the world. It is being built by Indian engineers and an Indian company, and we take great pride in this achievement. In this project as well, the pace of work has accelerated significantly over the past two years since June 2018, and the scale of investment that we have been able to make gives us full confidence that within the next two to two-and-a-half years this entire line will be connected. Thereafter, truly, the railway network of the country will stand unified from Kanyakumari to Baramulla. With one ticket and one nation, we will be able to connect the entire system.

You will be pleased to know that last year there was some shortfall in funds for this project. Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi granted us special powers and permitted the provision of additional funds, as a result of which Rs. 2,631 crore was invested in this project during the previous year. In the current year's Budget, an allocation of Rs. 3,800 crore has been made for this project.

Hon. Speaker Sir, this change in the Railways' way of thinking, how projects are to be taken up and how they are to be completed within stipulated timelines, is one important aspect. But, as has been rightly stated in the House, concern for demand and supply is equally essential, and that is absolutely correct. I will not repeat

myself at length today, but when I spoke in July, I had placed before the House detailed data on demand and supply. Over the past 65 years, railway capacity increased only marginally, whereas demand rose nearly fifteen-fold. I had presented all these figures in July. With prudence, and in consultation with NITI Aayog, we prepared a comprehensive perspective plan identifying future demand. We assessed which routes would require focused attention, where new lines and expansions would be necessary, where doubling, tripling or quadrupling would be essential, how electrification could be accelerated to increase speeds, and what investments would be required to raise speeds on corridors such as Mumbai–Delhi and Delhi–Howrah to 160 kilometres per hour. We also planned how to introduce more semi-high-speed and high-speed trains in the country so that passengers receive more comfortable travel options. Taking all these elements together, it is estimated that an investment of approximately Rs. 50 lakh crore will be required over the next twelve years. Some Hon. Members have commented on why we are involving the private sector and why permission is being given for private participation in running trains. If the Government alone were to bear an investment of Rs. 50 lakh crore, one can well imagine the annual financial burden this would entail. If such sums were spent exclusively by the Government, what would happen to social welfare schemes? How much would the burden of taxation

or fare increases on the public have to rise? Would that be prudent? The private sector possesses efficiency and capability, and it is sensible to utilise that strength as well. Where funds can be accessed at lower cost internationally, bringing in such capital will enable faster expansion of railway infrastructure, improved facilities, and better services for passengers. It will help ensure punctual train operations through automatic signalling systems, introduce new coaches that enhance safety to a new level, and improve overall passenger experience. Would this not be a wise course of action? … (*Interruption*s) It has also been stated that if some expenditure is incurred, the private sector may be able to deliver at a lower cost. … (*Interruption*s) That is a positive development. If the private sector brings in new facilities at lower cost, the benefit will ultimately accrue to the public. … (*Interruption*s) There is no disadvantage in that. … (*Interruption*s)

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: This will meet the same fate as BSNL. … (*Interruption*s) It will also end up like Air India. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Shri Adhir Ranjan Ji, I can also expose the facts regarding Air India. However, if I were to reveal which Government brought in aircraft at exorbitant prices and drove Air India into distress, it would be deeply embarrassing for you. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: You are answerable now.

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Hon. Speaker Sir, it is precisely because of this focused approach that we have placed the highest priority on safety. I have informed this House earlier as well that passenger safety is the foremost priority of this Government. I state this with immense satisfaction, though with due humility, seeking the blessings of God and also the blessings of all Hon. Members. In the financial year 2019–20, as on today, the 13th of March, from 1 April 2019 to 13 March 2020, not a single passenger has lost his or her life due to a railway accident.

At this moment, I am reminded of Bal Gangadhar Tilak Ji, whom I would like to quote: “The problem is not the lack of resources or capability, but the lack of will.” If one’s commitment and resolve are firm, if one’s willpower is strong, then everything becomes possible. I believe that the tireless efforts of nearly 13 lakh railway employees, working day and night, have led to this outcome, that not a single passenger life has been lost.

PROF. SOUGATA RAY (DUM DUM): Vacancies in the Railways are not being filled; in fact, vacancies are increasing every day.

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Hon. Speaker Sir, I recall that on several occasions there were discussions on how to enhance safety. Each time, the Hon. Prime Minister would emphasise the need for root cause analysis and urge us to go to the very root of the problem, because only by addressing the root can the solution be effective. Temporary solutions cannot put the country on the right path. When one goes to the root of the issue, it becomes evident that a particular coach design had been introduced thirty years ago. The LHB coach, developed through German–Swiss collaboration, came into existence three decades ago, yet between the years 2009 and 2014, only 1,866 coaches of this design were manufactured over five years. These coaches are relatively far safer. We have seen that during accidents, trains often pile up on one another or overturn due to derailment, resulting in loss of lives. LHB coaches are designed to withstand such situations.

Naturally, since this design had come thirty years ago, any responsible government would have promoted it further. The question arises as to why, for so many years, coaches continued to be manufactured on outdated designs. Over the past two years, we have completely scrapped the old design and have stopped the production of new coaches of that type. Today, coaches based on the newer ICF design are operating at high speed. As their service

life comes to an end, we cannot simply scrap them immediately, because previous governments invested lakhs of crores of rupees in manufacturing these coaches, and therefore we are obliged to utilise them for their full lifespan. Nevertheless, our endeavour is to replace them at the earliest possible opportunity.

You will be pleased to know that while only 1,866 coaches were manufactured in the earlier five-year period, as many as 9,932 coaches have been produced in the last five years, an increase of nearly five and a half times. On the coming 30th, I invite all Hon. Members to visit Rae Bareli with us and see the Modern Coach Factory.

Hon. Members may be surprised to learn that until the year 2014, not a single coach had been manufactured by that factory. The factory had a capacity to produce 1,000 coaches annually. Investments had already been made in a factory with a capacity of 1,000 coaches, but ... (*Interruption*s) until 2014, not even one coach was produced.

Hon. Prime Minister reviewed the situation and ensured that the factory became productive. A General Manager was posted, staff recruitment was undertaken, and in August 2014, the first coach was finally produced. Thereafter, gradual but close monitoring was ensured. Accountability was fixed. Those who performed well were

rewarded, and those who did not were transferred. Hard work was enforced. When I visited the factory for the first time, I was informed that not a single robotic system was operational. Why? Because procurements were mired in corruption. ... (*Interruption*s) An inquiry was underway, and therefore the machines were not being operated. I said that while the inquiry could continue in its own course, the machines must be made operational immediately. Within six months, the machines were running. Hon. Prime Minister himself visited Rae Bareli to see the Modern Coach Factory. He boosted the morale of the workers and encouraged the officers there. I am happy to inform this House that on the coming 30th, it is estimated that the Modern Coach Factory, which has a capacity of 1,000 coaches, will manufacture as many as 2,000 coaches in the year 2019–20.

You may examine any past experience and cite any example where a public sector enterprise has operated at 200 Percent of its rated capacity. I am not aware of such an example anywhere in India, and I believe that even globally, it would be extremely difficult to find one.

Sir, accidents used to occur from time to time at unmanned railway crossings. We would hear every day that there were thousands of unmanned railway crossings across the country. Hon.

Prime Minister asked a very simple question: why cannot they be eliminated, what is the difficulty? If investment is required, provide investment; if manpower is required, appoint personnel; but unmanned crossings should not continue. I am pleased to inform the House that compared to earlier times, accidents at unmanned crossings have now reduced to nearly one third. After this Government assumed office, funds were provided and manpower was deployed. As a result, across the main network, the entire broad gauge network is now virtually free of unmanned crossings. Only a few crossings remain in remote areas such as parts of the Barmer region in Rajasthan, where traffic is minimal and only one or two trains operate in a day. There, for technical reasons and because of large distances involved, it has not yet been possible to eliminate them. This is not due to lack of will, but purely due to technical constraints. Except for these limited cases, today there is not a single unmanned crossing on the entire broad gauge network. This is the outcome of determination, changed thinking and strong political will.

When the Vande Bharat Express was first introduced, some people attempted to make sharp and unwarranted criticisms. Senior leaders even tweeted that it did not run properly on the very first day, that something went wrong, and so on. Had they possessed

adequate information and understanding, they would not have made such remarks. I am confident that many of our brothers and sisters have experienced and enjoyed India's indigenous train, built using internationally benchmarked technology developed within the country. Whether it is travelling from Delhi to Katra for the darshan of Mata Vaishno Devi, or from Delhi to Banaras for the darshan of Kashi Vishwanath, ... *(Interruptions)* this train, manufactured in Chennai by Indian engineers and workers, is today serving the people of the country. Every journey on it is comfortable, and it has an excellent record of punctuality. We have now initiated the tendering process, and tenders have been floated for 44 additional Vande Bharat trains. Chittaranjan Locomotive Works manufactured 402 locomotives in the year 2018–19. As was mentioned yesterday in English, this achievement found a place in the Limca Book of Records. This year, they will not only break that record but will manufacture even more locomotives. …*(Interruptions)*

Similarly, there is the issue of cleanliness. I believe this has been one of the most significant priorities of this Government. I would like to thank every Member who, at different times, met me personally or appreciated cleanliness during the debate. I dedicate this appreciation entirely to the 13 lakh railway employees. Today,

you may look at any railway station ... (*Interruption*s) the level of cleanliness is evident. You may be surprised to know, and Supriya Tai is seated here, though I do not see many Members from Mumbai at the moment, that for decades huge amounts of garbage used to accumulate along the railway tracks in Mumbai. The stench was so unbearable that people even hesitated to walk near the tracks. In just one year, we removed nearly three lakh cubic metres of waste from the Mumbai tracks alone and transported it over long distances by muck trains to designated dumping grounds. Today, if you look at the railway tracks in Mumbai, they appear clean and well maintained. We are now expanding this practice of keeping tracks clean across the entire country. Mahatma Gandhi had said, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." Cleanliness must come first. Just as we maintain cleanliness in places of worship, we must first ensure cleanliness in the entire surroundings, and only then proceed to worship.

I recall that the Hon. Prime Minister had once given a suggestion regarding paintings. Many Hon. Members may have seen this initiative. Be it Madhubani paintings, the depiction of Warkari traditions in Maharashtra, or similar artistic expressions in Rajasthan, at hundreds of railway stations people came forward voluntarily, through public participation, and created beautiful

paintings on station premises, showcasing their artistic talent. I have been informed that as a result of this initiative, many of these artists subsequently received good opportunities for work. People were so impressed by their talent that they began offering them assignments and inviting them for professional engagements.

This Government follows a 360-degree approach, and cleanliness is one clear example of this. Allow me to present a brief glimpse of that 360-degree approach. Cleanliness in the Railways is essential. Converting toilets into bio-toilets, so that human waste does not fall on the tracks, is equally essential. This is not required only for cleanliness, but also for safety. Uric acid that earlier fell on the tracks used to corrode them rapidly, leading to frequent track deterioration. This resulted in increased renewals, higher expenditure, financial losses, compromised safety, and the risk of accidents. Tracks had to be replaced sooner, requiring additional investment, which in turn created a backlog. When we assumed office, we inherited a backlog of track renewals running into thousands of kilometres, which should have been completed earlier but had not been done. There were only two possible approaches. Either one could continue laying tracks that would keep deteriorating, or one could reduce the very cause of track deterioration. Hon. Prime Minister Sir clearly said that the cause

itself must be eliminated. The primary cause of track damage was uric acid. Whatever funds were required for installing bio-toilets were fully provided by us. I am pleased to inform the House today that bio-toilets have now been installed in 99 Percent of railway coaches. If India is to be made ODF, this responsibility also rests with the Railways. We will complete the remaining 500 toilets within the next one or two months. Similarly, the Jal Jeevan Mission is a firm commitment of this Government. We have resolved to provide tap water to every household. My colleague, SHRI Gajendra Shekhawat, is working day and night on this mission. However, for this, we must also conserve water. Water conservation is our collective responsibility, and it is also the responsibility of the Railways. When we studied this issue, we found that nearly sixteen and a half thousand litres of water were being used to clean a single rake. If a rake is cleaned manually, even with honesty, it still cannot be cleaned properly because a large amount of dirt gets firmly embedded. Therefore, we have begun installing Automatic Coach Cleaning Plants across the country at a rapid pace. We have ordered 125 Automatic Coach Cleaning Machines, of which 18 have already been sanctioned. You will be pleased to know that water consumption has come down from sixteen and a half thousand litres to just 4 Percent, that is, about 600 litres. In other words, where earlier sixteen and a half thousand

litres of water were required, cleaning is now completed using only about 1,500 litres. Thereafter, this 1,500 litres of water is recycled, and through recycling, we are able to save about 900 litres more. Just imagine, across the entire country, this results in nearly 96 Percent water savings. I was calculating that the investment made will be fully recovered through these savings within one or two years. You will recall the LED programme, where the entire investment was recovered through savings within just four months.

This is the thinking of Prime Minister Modi. How to bring about change, and how to bring about change with wisdom, by going to the root of the problem and eliminating it from the very source, this is how we are all taught to work. On a lighter note, many of us would have seen the film Toilet: Ek Prem Katha. In that film, a man wants to ensure that his wife does not have to defecate in the open. He used to take her to a railway station, and when the train halted, she was compelled to use the toilet only for that brief duration. In earlier times, no one paid attention to this issue. After coming to power, Shri Modi addressed both these problems. He ensured the construction of 11 crore toilets so that no one has to face such a situation. Earlier, toilets at stations could hardly be used, and even if they were, the entire station would be filled with foul odour. This problem too has now been resolved through bio-toilets. I am giving

this as an example of a 360-degree approach. Today, if you visit railway stations, you will not experience any unpleasant smell at all. Just as we try to keep our homes clean, we are now making the same effort to ensure that our stations are maintained in the same manner.

Hon. Speaker Sir, there is another challenge facing the country, and I would like to inform the House how the Hon. Prime Minister has envisioned a 360-degree solution to it and how work on this is progressing at a rapid pace. On the one hand, the nation is grappling with the problem of pollution, and on the other, we continue to face the challenge of importing crude oil from abroad. Even today, India imports crude oil from foreign countries. The large-scale import of crude oil leads to a depletion of our foreign exchange reserves and also weakens the rupee. The resulting current account deficit contributes to inflationary pressures. The Hon. Prime Minister has urged all of us Ministers to contribute in our respective capacities. He has clearly directed that we must work towards reducing crude oil imports while simultaneously addressing and reducing the problem of pollution.

To address this challenge, the Railways launched a programme for 100 Percent electrification. As I mentioned earlier, the figure stood at just 610 kilometres in the year 2013–14. From 610

kilometres, it increased to 5,200 kilometres last year, and this year it will reach close to 6,000 kilometres. Just reflect on the scale of this transformation. This will not only save diesel, but will also reduce our dependence on importing crude oil from abroad. The electricity that will be used will be generated from India's coal, in Indian power plants, by Indian companies. This means employment will be created within India, power plants within the country will get work, and all the equipment required for power generation will also be manufactured in India. Once 100 Percent electrification is achieved, imagine the impact. The smoke emitted by diesel engines may look appealing in films, with songs playing in the background, but I believe that to eliminate pollution, we must also free ourselves from this reality. This work is progressing at a rapid pace. The Hon. Prime Minister is never one to be easily satisfied, and I am sure everyone here is aware of that. Even as one task nears completion, he is already thinking ahead to the next stage. Recently, he set a new target for me. It will give all of you great satisfaction to know that Indian Railways is now poised to become the world's first railway system of this scale to achieve 100 Percent electrification.

He has now given a new target, and even in this you can see the 360-degree thinking at work. … (*Interruption*s) Hon. Speaker Sir, we are all aware that encroachment takes place on Railway land.

Encroachment not only results in loss of land, but also creates serious difficulties when the Railways have to implement projects. He said that wherever Railway land is lying vacant, a complete solar energy system should be installed on it. In this manner, he has set a target of generating 20,000 megawatts of electricity. Now, for 20,000 megawatts of power, solar panels will be installed on the land, and when that land is required for Railway projects, the solar energy systems can simply be shifted elsewhere without any loss. This will provide us with 20,000 megawatts of inexpensive electricity. All Hon. Members are aware how affordable solar power has become today. After Shri Modi Ji assumed office, electricity from solar power is available at Rs. 2.5 to Rs. 3 per unit. … (*Interruption*s) When this 20,000 megawatts of solar energy is generated, it will enable us to meet the entire power requirement of the Railways through renewable energy alone. Indian Railways will become the first railway system in the world to achieve zero pollution.

When I meet foreign delegations, Ministers and Prime Ministers, and speak with them, they are often astonished when they experience how forward-looking the vision of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Modi Ji truly is. In the same spirit, with regard to how the Railways can serve farmers in a better and more effective manner,

the Hon. Finance Minister has placed before this House the concept of Kisan Rail. A group has been constituted which is studying how, through public private partnership and with some government investment, we can create a seamless cold supply chain across the country, particularly for perishable commodities such as milk, fish and similar products. Why should apples from Kashmir not reach Kanyakumari directly by Rail? Why should tea produced in Assam not reach ports and be exported abroad seamlessly? Why should coffee grown in Karnataka not be sold across the entire country? I do not know whether Hon. Members have noticed two very important aspects in this context or not. First, as part of station redevelopment, you would have experienced a change in the lighting arrangements at Railway stations.

Today, at nearly four hundred to four hundred and fifty railway stations, bright lights on the lines of airports are being installed to make them safe and secure, and this initiative is being progressively expanded. At present, the Railways has achieved one hundred Percent LED lighting. In recent years, special attention has been paid to toilets. Since passenger footfall at halt stations is limited, we have constructed separate toilets for men and women at every major station. On a very large scale, work is also underway to construct separate toilets for Divyangjan at different stations. I have requested

several companies to construct toilets in about 2,800 circulating areas of major stations, so that nearby shopkeepers and passengers who are outside the station premises may also have access to toilet facilities. This programme has also been initiated.

Shri Adhir Ranjan Ji was speaking about escalators and lifts. Until the year 2014, there were only 143 escalators and 97 lifts installed across the country. In the last five years, 519 new escalators and 391 lifts have been installed. I have figures available up to January. In the last one year and ten months alone, we have provided 74 escalators and 71 lifts. Further, 600 escalators and 1,100 lifts are proposed to be provided over the next four years.

All of you are well aware of the Wi-Fi facility. Today, Wi-Fi services are available at 5,628 railway stations. Did anyone even think of or imagine the provision of Wi-Fi at railway stations before the year 2014? You will be pleased to know that in the month of February alone, 2 crore 70 lakh people used this Wi-Fi service. I have been informed that the usage per passenger is around 300 to 350 megabytes per single login. I believe that one can download an entire movie within two to three minutes. I am happy to state that the Railways Wi-Fi is the fastest Wi-Fi service in the country.

The issue of train punctuality has also been raised. I am surprised, because all Members come to me and say that now no

train is delayed by eight hours, six hours, or even four hours. If on one or two occasions this has happened due to a technical problem, that is a different matter, but we have addressed such issues in a systematic manner. If a train is delayed by eight hours, it is first zeroed. If a train is delayed by more than four hours, it is also zeroed. Naturally, colleagues from the Opposition may cite examples that a particular train was delayed on a particular day. That is possible, because in such a vast network, where thousands of trains run every day, minor disruptions can occur. Sometimes a cow, an elephant, or some other animal may come onto the railway track, resulting in delays. Occasionally, even a herd of elephants comes onto the track. Recently, in Assam, elephants were moving along the track, but its impact was felt as far as Mumbai and Kanyakumari, because the railway system is fully interconnected. The level of focus that we have placed on punctuality has, I believe, never been seen before.

I would like to give an example of how, earlier, whatever the Station Master recorded was treated as the final truth, and punctuality reports were prepared accordingly. I was surprised because whenever I spoke to officials, everyone said that punctuality was very good, whereas Members of Parliament and the general public came and said that punctuality was not good.

Therefore, we followed the Hon. Prime Minister's model of going to the root cause. Just as when one goes to a doctor without explaining what the actual problem is, how can the doctor cure the illness? If we worked on incorrect punctuality data, the outcomes would not be right. Therefore, we installed automatic electronic capturing devices at all interlocking points, and as a result, the complete and actual punctuality data came to light. The figures that Adhir Ranjan Ji was referring to, stating that your punctuality has declined. ... (*Interruption*s)

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: I am talking about the punctuality of your Railways. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: I am explaining it in Hindi. If there is any difficulty, I can explain it in English as well. ... (*Interruption*s) If, over all these years, incorrect reports had not been presented on the basis of incorrect data, and once the correct data was electronically collected and the real picture emerged, we placed that reality before the country. Thereafter, like a doctor, we addressed the problem on the basis of that reality and are continuously working to reduce it further.

I am pleased to inform the House that, compared to the year 2018–19, and even if we look at the current year, out of 30,000 trains, 87 trains per day were delayed by more than four hours last

year. Today, that figure has come down to 47. Even when measured in minutes, we are not merely checking how many trains are delayed, but we are also examining, minute by minute, whether there is an improvement or not. In this regard, I am happy to state that compared to last year, the total minutes of delay have already been reduced by one-third, and we are continuously making improvements in this direction. ... (*Interruption*s)

PROF. SOUGATA RAY: Hon. Speaker Sir, will the train not stop at all? … *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Hon. Speaker Sir, as I have stated earlier, if I begin to enumerate the figures, because I have all the data with me whether it relates to new lines, gauge conversion, doubling, tripling or even quadrupling of lines, in every area we have placed very large figures and clear targets before the House. We have continuously made efforts to achieve these targets, and I am pleased to inform the House that in the year 2018–19 alone, by adding nearly 480 kilometres of new lines, 600 kilometres of gauge conversion, and about 1,500 kilometres through doubling and tripling, we expanded the railway network by approximately 2,600 kilometres. This year, up to February itself, we have once again completed nearly 2,000 kilometres, and by the end of the year, we will surpass last year’s figures as well. We are fully committed to

ensuring that the country continuously receives new facilities, punctuality improves, services are enhanced, and the overall passenger experience becomes better.

Some allegations were also made regarding the Tejas-type trains introduced by the Government, questioning what benefit they have delivered. The benefit is this: so far, two main Tejas trains have been operated, one between Lucknow and Delhi, and the other between Ahmedabad and Mumbai. Both these trains have recorded occupancy levels of more than 90 Percent, and punctuality in excess of 90 Percent. If, on any occasion, they are delayed by between one hour and two hours, passengers receive a refund of Rs. 100. If the delay exceeds two hours, passengers receive a refund of Rs. 250. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: Why do you not do this for every train? ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: The Railways has undertaken this as a pilot. Hon. Speaker Sir, this was not a simple experiment. Had this been done during their time, the entire Railway treasury would have been drained, and they would not have been able to pay the full compensation. We showed the courage to undertake this initiative, and the result of that courage has been that, without changing any rules, the Tejas train has not been given any special priority. The

priority accorded to Tejas trains is the same regular priority as that of Rajdhani, Gatimaan, Duronto and Tejas trains, and without making any change in that established priority system, we entered the field with confidence. The outcome of that confidence has been that everyone became focused on improving punctuality, and this is the result. We will continue to take this forward, and its benefits will accrue to all. ... *(Interruptions)*

A major problem that is repeatedly referred to is that of touts in the Railways. In many places, the experience has been that the moment booking for a train opens, the train becomes fully booked and tickets are not available. Over the last one to one and a half years, after conducting thorough investigations and deep deliberation, we have launched a concerted drive to address this issue. You will be pleased to know that several illegal software applications such as ANMs, MSC, iBall and RedBull have been detected, and action has been taken against the middlemen involved. A total of 104 persons engaged in selling such software have been arrested. About 5,300 touts were involved in black marketing and selling tickets. In the last one year and two months, 5,300 touts have been arrested. As many as 884 booking vendors have been blacklisted. Now, I believe that the entire chain of vendors and ticketing agents is no longer necessary. I am

considering discontinuing the practice whereby train agents and booking sub-agents put up boards claiming that tickets will be available faster through them. Today, everyone has a mobile phone, and tickets can be booked directly on the phone. By putting an end to such wrongful practices, and if any person needs assistance, they can go to the Government's Common Service Centres and book tickets there. Dedicated young men and women work there with great enthusiasm and commitment. Their income will also increase slightly, and tickets will be booked honestly and efficiently. Through you, Hon. Speaker Sir, I would appeal to the country that no one should fall for fake tickets or so-called guaranteed reservations. Recently, we have cancelled and blacklisted tickets worth nearly Rs. 10 crore that were generated through such illegal software. Those who obtained tickets through such wrongful means have suffered double losses the bribe paid to the tout is gone, and now the ticket is also cancelled. I would request that nobody should fall prey to such practices. If tickets are booked honestly through the website, we will succeed in resolving this problem completely.

Adhir Ranjan Ji had mentioned one more point, and Suresh Ji had also spoken about it. Several Hon. Members were raising the issue of stoppages. From time to time, Hon. Members approach us with requests for very essential stoppages. I examined this issue

right from the root and sought detailed information. It emerged that over the past 60 to 70 years, stoppages have been granted under various pressures and for different reasons. Today, the situation is such that there are several stations where ten, twelve, fifteen, twenty or even forty trains stop, but there are hardly any passengers. At some places, only two passengers alight, and at others, four passengers board. These stoppages are now clogging the entire system. Because of these stoppages, our capacity to provide new stoppages has been exhausted. There are many stoppages about which it is not even clear as to when they were granted and for what reason they were provided.

I placed this matter before the Consultative Committee, and I would like to thank all Hon. Members that the Consultative Committee took a governing decision that all existing stoppages should be studied afresh. Each stoppage will be examined to assess how many passengers alight and board there. Stoppages will be determined in a technical, rational and profitable manner, and those stoppages that can be withdrawn will be withdrawn. This will lead to an improvement in train facilities, better punctuality, and ensure that trains reach their destinations on time. It will also restore the Railways' capacity to provide new stoppages that are essential and required by Hon. Members.

One final issue was raised by a Hon. Member. In fact, I had expected this issue to be raised more extensively, but through you, Hon. Speaker Sir, I would like to thank all Hon. Members for not pressing it further. Everyone here is aware that the Railways was divided into multiple departments and functioned in silos. This departmentalism, which has troubled the country for nearly a hundred years, created serious difficulties in providing safety and facilities in the Railways and led to inter-departmental disputes and constant friction. The hardship caused by these internal differences had become a major problem. If there was any Government that had the courage to put an end to this long-standing issue, it is this Government. No one has done this in the last hundred years.

I would like to assure everyone that all my officers, nearly 18,000 officers who are presently working in the Railways, have largely welcomed this step. This is not my personal idea. We organised seminars and held extensive discussions with officers and Railway officials. I personally interacted with the Railway Board and Railway officers across the country through video conferencing. A new Sushma Swaraj Bhawan has been constructed by the Government, where officers from across the country came together and shared their respective ideas. Taking all these views into account, we have taken the courageous decision to merge eight

services into a single service, namely the Indian Railway Management Service. This will become an effective instrument for running the Railways efficiently in the country. Globally, we are the only railway system that has such a form of departmentalism. I have studied several countries, but I have not found such departmentalism anywhere else. Some young men and women have certain misconceptions about this reform. I am in constant touch with them and continue to engage with them in dialogue. I would like to assure everyone that no one's career will be harmed, and no one will suffer any kind of loss. With full responsibility and balance, through a Committee of Secretaries and a Committee of Ministers, all issues will be carefully understood and this will be shaped into a single service in a prudent manner. Recruitment through the UPSC will not take place for one year. However, as a short-term pain, we may not receive two to four hundred officers, but this short-term pain will bring long-term gains for the country. Those gains are unimaginable and substantial. For this, I seek the support of all Hon. Members so that we can implement this reform successfully.

Adhir Ranjan Ji, please do not feel aggrieved that I did not give you a specific reply earlier. You had referred to Jiaganj–Azimganj in Murshidabad, West Bengal, and stated that the railway line there

is only seven kilometres long. You are absolutely correct that only 466 metres of work remains, for which we require 7.585 acres of land. I would like to request all Hon. Members, and Dada, you are also seated here, that if the State Government provides us with this 7.5 acres of land, then such a senior leader of your Congress Party, who unfortunately could not become the Leader of the Opposition because the people did not give him adequate numbers, ... (*Interruption*s) today we nevertheless accord him full respect as the Leader of the Opposition. I am fully committed to completing the work on this railway line. ... (*Interruption*s) The moment this land is made available, we will work day and night to complete this project. ... (*Interruption*s)

There is one more subject which will give happiness to all Hon. Members. Over the last three years, we have also placed strong emphasis on recruitment. Earlier, there used to be significant shortages, particularly in safety-related works. As I have mentioned, in order to achieve zero passenger fatalities, 13 lakh people have been engaged in this effort. Between the years 2017 and 2020, over a period of three years, 1,47,620 new employees have been empanelled. The process concerning them is underway many have already joined duty, and many more are in the process of joining. Among these, there are 35,208 employees in the NTPC

category, whose recruitment process is currently ongoing. There are 1,663 persons in isolated categories, and 1,03,770 posts at Level 1. We have carried out recruitment for all these categories through different processes, or they are presently in the recruitment pipeline.

I believe these are different strands of work, and the manner in which momentum has been imparted, and the way in which a sensitive Government has worked to enhance facilities for both passengers and freight, while ensuring that the burden on the public remains limited. When the capacity exists to bear a small burden, people are willing to accept it with a positive sentiment, especially when they see that safety has improved, stations have improved, cleanliness at stations has improved, and punctuality has improved.

Adhir Ranjan Ji, it is for this reason that we have made a marginal increase. ... (*Interruption*s) I therefore thank you. No one objected, because when a slight increase results in much greater benefits, which is the working style of Hon. Prime Minister Modi Ji, when greater facilities are delivered through some initial hardship, I believe everyone feels satisfied and appreciates the effort. I am fully confident that despite all these challenging circumstances, and notwithstanding the burden of the Seventh Pay Commission, we must modernise the Railways, make the Railways safer, and make services more convenient. The journey which,

many years ago during one era, was associated with hardship, should become a pleasant journey. Once again, Hindi films should be shot showcasing how enjoyable travel by rail has become. In that direction, the Railways is progressing at great speed.

Hon. Speaker Sir, I would like to thank the entire House, and you, for giving me the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

[English]

SHRI ANUBHAV MOHANTY (KENDRAPARA): Sir, I seek your protection. …*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Please maintain order, otherwise you will have to listen to the speech for another hour.

. . . *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Several Cut Motions have been moved by Members in respect of the Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Railways. I shall now put all the Cut Motions to the vote of the House.

The cut Motions were put and negatived.

14.00 hrs

SHRI ANUBHAV MOHANTY (KENDRAPARA): Sir, I want to say something.

HON. SPEAKER: You may meet the Hon. Minister in the Chamber.

SHRI ANUBHAV MOHANTY: Sir, please allow me to speak for just two minutes.

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: Anubhav ji, I will meet you later.

HON. SPEAKER: I shall now put the Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Railways to the vote of the House.

The question is:

"That the amounts relating to Revenue Account and Capital Account shown in Column 3 of the List of Demands for Grants, in respect of Demand No. 83 relating to the Ministry of Railways, as shown against the Demand Heading in Column 2 of the said List, be granted to the President out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the expenditure during the year ending 31 March, 2021."

[English]

Demands for Grants for 2020-2021 submitted to the vote of Lok Sabha

	No. & Name of Demand	Amount of Demand for Grant submitted to the Vote of the House	
	1	2	
		Revenue (Rupees)	Capital (Rupees)
	Ministry of Railways 83. Ministry of railways	283481,64, 00,000	237526,79, 00,000

The Motion was adopted.

HON. SPEAKER: The Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Railways have been passed.

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SHRI ANUBHAV MOHANTY: Sir, I would like to speak for two minutes on this very subject.

HON. SPEAKER: Anubhav Ji, I will give you an opportunity to speak on Monday. When the Finance Bill is taken up for discussion, the Railways will also be included, and you may place your views at that time. Since I have given an assurance in the House, I will certainly give you the opportunity.

14.02 hrs

UNION BUDGET- 2020-2021

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS- 2020-2021-Contd...

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

HON. SPEAKER: Now, Demands for Grants Nos. 92 and 93 relating to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment will be taken up for discussion and to the vote of the House.

Hon. Members present in the House, in whose names Cut Motions relating to the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment have been circulated, and who wish to move their Cut Motions, may send slips to the Table within 15 minutes indicating the numbers of the Cut Motions they wish to move.

A list indicating the serial numbers of the Cut Motions so presented will be displayed on the Notice Board after some time. If any Member finds any discrepancy in that list, they may immediately bring it to the notice of the officer present at the Table.

Hon. Members who wish to leave may do so, and those who wish to remain seated may please take their seats.

Motion moved:

"That the amounts relating to Revenue Account and Capital Account shown in Column 3 of the List of Demands for Grants, in respect of Demands Nos. 92 and 93 relating to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, as shown against the Demand Headings in Column 2 of the said List, be granted to the President out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the expenditure during the year ending 31 March, 2021.

Demands for Grants for 2020-2021 submitted to the vote of Lok Sabha

No. & Name of Demand	Amount of Demand for Grant submitted to the Vote of the House	
1	2	3
	Revenue (Rupees)	Capital (Rupees)

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	9557,57,00,000	546,00,00,000
92. Department of Social Justice and Empowerment	1325,38,00,000	1,00,000
93. Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities		

HON. SPEAKER: Discussion and voting on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Item No. 18, shall now commence. Shri Kodikunnil Suresh Ji may initiate the discussion.

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): First of all, I would like to thank the Hon. Speaker for allowing a discussion on Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Hon. Speaker was kind enough to include this topic for discussion on my request as Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment were not part of the Demands-related discussion in the Business Advisory Committee.

14.04 hrs (Shrimati Rama Devi *in the Chair*)

Hon. Speaker had understood the need for an analysis of the Demand allocated under the General Budget 2020-21 as the voice of the Scheduled Castes and other backward sections, including women, children and the weaker sections, is not listened to anywhere, be it in the Parliament or in the public discourse.

Madam, Dalits and adivasis are the most oppressed classes as they are victims of two types of oppression – oppression from the State and oppression from the society – despite the legal provision for protection and support.

What is the general scenario of this country? The general scenario of this country is not good for Scheduled Castes,

Scheduled Tribes and other vulnerable sections of the society. That is why we need to provide effective and targeted Governmental intervention, both in terms of protection and specific allocation with mechanisms to ensure 100 per cent utility of funds. But even as we stand in this august House to speak on behalf of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs, an atmosphere of fear is spread in the country against them.

As I stand in this august House this day, what I witness is a cloud of fear enveloping the hearts and minds of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and all my fellow beings. Why are we reduced to a nation of shockwaves of anxiety and scant expectations of future, from what the world viewed as symbol of hope and prosperity?

Our nation has been subjected to a regime led by BJP that defies democracy, that destroys the sanctity of institutions that retarded growth and opportunity for its youth, a regime that made rule of law extinct and made rule of mobs the new law and murder of dissent the new fundamental philosophy.

What is the situation in this atmosphere of fear when we talk about social justice and empowerment? Rohit Vemula and Pehlu Khan will be turning in their grave when the BJP Government talks about social justice.

The Dalits who are denied justice everyday in every walk of life will laugh at the Budget speech of Shrimati Nirmala Seetharaman. I would like to quote a part of Hon. Finance Minister's Budget speech in this House. What did the Finance Minister say in her Budget speech? She said: "For today's youth born at the turn of the century, for every Member of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe who seeks a better life, for every woman wishing to stand up and get counted, for every individual from the minority sections of our society – this Budget aims to have your aspirations and hopes addressed".

Will their aspirations and hopes be addressed by lynching and flogging of *dalits* by lynch mobs? Would you address their aspirations by beating them to death by holding kangaroo courts? Will you address their hopes by systematically denying them every avenue of growth and by sabotaging their constitutionally-mandated rights of reservation by diluting norms of reservations? If it is so, this Budget is a brilliant picture that cleverly hides the devious designs the BJP Government has projected for the vast numbers of unemployed *dalit* youth. There is no doubt about that.

I am going to talk about the deficiencies in the allocations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the General Budget 2020-21. Before moving further to the discussion, let me highlight a few points referring to the allocation of SCs/STs in this Budget

which exposes the Government's duplicity of declaration and its intention. The allocation for Scheduled Castes stands at Rs. 83,257 crore and for the Rs.53,653 crore for Scheduled Tribes for the financial year 2020-21.

Hon. Chairperson, 323 schemes for SCs and 331 schemes for STs have been allocated for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively.

In this Budget for the financial year 2020-21, the proportion of targeted schemes comes to 19.43 per cent with Rs.16,174 crore allocated under SC budget and 36.02 per cent with Rs.19,428 crore for STs. I do not know whether the Hon. Minister is aware of this allocation. These schemes are *de facto* general schemes in a clever manner, cheating the SC/ST by making them feel as these allocations are exclusively SC/ST budget schemes. The development gap, therefore, is still remaining unaddressed. There is a total gap in allocation of Rs.1,22,998 crore under SC Budget and Rs.57,606 crore under ST budget. Out of the total budget allocation for SCs, only Rs.16,174 crore is for targeted schemes, that means, 19 per cent and for STs, it is Rs.19,429 crore, that means, 36 per cent. So, I am comparing the budget allocation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Madam, there is a reduction in allocation for SC/ST women and also there is a reduction of allocation in implementation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. SC and ST women are the most vulnerable among the women in the country as they are subjected to violence of system, violence of patriarchal system, caste oppression and to violence of society. So, the SC/ST women should have been allotted a significant sum in this Budget. But the Government has only allocated just 0.8 per cent, that means, Rs.7,986.34 crore for 2020-21 for Dalit women and 0.34 per cent, that means, Rs.3.174.91 crore for Tribal women for the Centrally-sponsored Schemes and Central sector schemes.

While Rs.30 crore has been allocated for boys' hostels, the girls' hostels are completely ignored. Is this the *nari shakti* the Government is taking pride in? Madam, where is *nari shakti*? There is no allocation for SC/ST women for their hostel construction and hostel facilities.

Madam, the allocation for the Post Matric Scholarships has been increased very nominally from Rs.2,926 crore to Rs.2,987 crore. The budget allocation for the Post Matric Scholarship (PMS) Scheme is inadequate. The allocation for Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC girls is Rs.251 crore and Rs.82 crore for ST girls. Madam, this is a very meagre amount.

The amount allocated for the implementation of the SC/ST PoA Act has been reduced from Rs.189 crore to Rs.165 crore. That is also a very serious matter. This figure very clearly shows that the Government is ignoring the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in a systematic manner, just as they have been doing by diluting the reservation norms and protections by targeted interventions in the court. It is the case whether it is dilution of the SC / ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act or the opinion on reservation in appointments in public sector.

I am coming to the sectoral allocation with regard to this Budget. From farmers to rural poor, the Modi Government makes its stand clear that there is no allocation for the poor and farmers. If the budget allocation for the farming sector is not adequate, then mainly the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will be affected. I am saying this because the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people are engaged as labourers in the agricultural sector. Hence, if the budget allocation is not sufficient for it, then it will adversely affect the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people. The allocation in this Budget for the agricultural sector is very meagre.

As regards MNREGA, MNREGA is helping the poor Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people to earn their daily income. MNREGA is a path-breaking scheme that intends to reduce

poverty and improve household income in rural areas whereas allocation for the same stands reduced. It is Rs. 10,000 crore less than the previous year's allocation for it. The food subsidy has also been reduced. I am not going into the figures for it due to paucity of time. These steps will also affect the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

With all these reductions, it can be seen that this Government has closed its heart, shut its eyes and turned its ears away from the panic and agony of agricultural labourers of whom a majority are Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This is not a pro-SC Budget. This is an assault on their livelihood and their very existence.

As regards the NITI Aayog, this Government has constituted NITI Aayog in place of the Planning Commission, but there is no representation for SC or ST in the NITI Aayog. Who is controlling the NITI Aayog? It is the upper caste people who are controlling the NITI Aayog. How can they know about the problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes? They do not have any information or experience as to how Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people live, and the situation that they are in.

What is the NITI Aayog recommending through the Government? The guidelines for earmarking funds for development

of SCs and STs by the NITI Aayog is worth mentioning to point out the differences between preaching and practice of this Government. I would like to quote the guideline, which states that: "… Earmarking should be against the overall allocation for schemes of the Ministries / Departments and not against the total budget of the concerned Ministries / Departments over and above the overall allocation for the schemes. However, the Ministries / Departments will have flexibility to allocate funds for SCs and STs for specific activities within their overall budget in case their existing schemes are not amenable to or do not have the scope for any such activities for SCs and STs…".

So, the Ministries and Departments are in effect instructed by the Government to find means of allocation for SC / ST within the allocation and not against the total Budget where flexibility and need-based expansion is actually possible. It means that by compartmentalizing the scope of the Ministries to allocate funds for SC / STs the Government has indeed reduced the possibility of allocation itself.

I am reminded of mirage in a desert by the actions of NITI Aayog where we feel that the oasis is real and we try hard to reach there. But in reality, there is no oasis, it is just a mirage covering the emptiness. Hence, the Government has already applied a clever and devious restriction in the allocation and their natural

justification of policy limitations. I would also highlight that as per the guidelines of earmarking funds for development of the SCs and the STs, 41 ministries/departments shall earmark funds for the SC & ST communities under specific schemes but only 35 ministries have allocated funds for SCs and 38 ministries for STs. This is the overall situation concerning SCs and STs in various ministries.

I am coming to mismatch in allocations concerning SCs and STs. According to the allocations for SCs and STs guidelines, 41 ministries and departments are supposed to earmark a total fund of Rs.1,39,172 crore for and implementing 323 schemes for SCs but only Rs.83,257 crore was allocated. I do not know whether the Minister is aware of these figures. For STs it is supposed to be Rs.77,034 crore but actually only Rs.53,653 crore was allocated. Out of 323 schemes for SCs, only 52 are targeted schemes, and 271 are non-targeting schemes amounting only Rs.16,174 crore and Rs.67,083 crore respectively. Similarly, out of 323 schemes, only 42 are targeted schemes worth Rs.19,428 crore and 289 are non-targeted schemes worth Rs.30,225 crore. Even when the quantum of funds seems to be increasing proportionately, the same is decreasing in respect of allocation to SCs and STs in the last five years.

Recently, in *The Economic Times* report of 9th March, 2020, it is stated that not a single ministry has fully utilised funds earmarked

for the welfare of SCs in the current fiscal year 2019-2020. In 2019-2020, the Ministry has allocated Rs.81,340.70 crore for the schemes of SCs. A high-level review of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has revealed that only one ministry, the Ministry of Rural Development, out of 41 ministries when it comes to utilisation of funds, has shown satisfaction. Hon. Minister, only one ministry out of 41 ministries has shown satisfaction when it comes to utilisation of funds and that is Ministry of Rural Development. Most of the ministries show only 50-60 per cent utilisation of funds, with less than a month for the current fiscal year to end. The review has found that funds are meant for general schemes and not targeted intervention for SC community. So, we can conclude that by making notional allocation of funds, this Government is diluting actual intent. I am inviting the kind attention of the Hon. Minister. Madam, I am inviting a kind attention of the Hon. Minister to it. The reduced scope of budgetary provision through 'notional allocation' for SCs/STs destroys the objective of target intervention. There is underutilisation of the funds by the Ministries for the welfare of SCs/STs.

Madam, I am not going to the talk about the mismatch in budgetary allocations during last five years under the BJP Government because of time constraint. If I talk about BJP Government as to what they have given to the Scheduled Castes and

the Scheduled Tribes, it will take a lot of time. I am also not going to talk about the UPA Government as to what they had done.

The status of Dalits in our country needs to be mentioned in this House. The Government may be wondering as to why there must be a debate over social justice and empowerment. There is no time during which voice of SCs/STs/OBCs are raised who are at risk, who have constant fear and who are unable to exercise their rights.

This is the time to speak about the facts of this Government. It is possible under Modi Government and BJP Government. The National Crime Records Bureau data of 2016 suggests that four Dalit women are raped every day, thirteen Dalits are murdered each week, five Dalit homes are burnt each week and six Dalit women are raped each week. It is estimated that the crime is committed on Dalit person every eighteen minutes. This is not my record. This is the record of the National Crime Records Bureau, a Central agency.

Dalit children are made to sit separately from other children in schools. Almost one out of every three Government schools in rural areas prohibits children from sitting together. Dalits are prevented from entering police station in 27.6 per cent of Indian villages. Public health workers refuse to enter Dalit homes in 33 per cent of villages. Dalits are denied access to water sources in almost half of the villages. In this situation, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled

Tribes need a comprehensive support and a provision of Government assistance to them to overcome the wall of discrimination set against them.

Madam, I am not going into the details because the higher education and school education are the most important things which are totally neglected in the context of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You have already taken 24–25 minutes while speaking.

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: Madam, I will conclude in five minutes.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You want another five minutes. That is all the time available to you. Please speak without referring to your papers.

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: Madam, I will conclude. Nobody has given this data. The BJP Government has a lot of limitations. That is why I am bringing out these details in this

House. In the education sector – higher education and general education – there is a lot of chaos. The dropout rate of the students is high and also there is less appointment of teachers belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe. Even in IIT and IIM, they are not appointing teachers properly belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe. Also, students drop out everywhere in the higher education. There is no mechanism for preventing the dropout of the students belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe in the higher education. Madam Chairman, there are several media reports about the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe issues and I am not going into all that. Safai Karmacharis are also facing many problems.

The verdict of Hon. Supreme Court vis-à-vis reservation in promotions is also a very important issue which we are faced with. The Government is not ready to come with a legislation to include this in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution. Reservation in private sector is a very important issue.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Members, those Hon. Members who wish to lay their written speeches on the Table are permitted to do so. The written speeches will be included in the proceedings of the House.

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: Reservation in private sector is a long pending demand from the Scheduled Castes community. But the Government is not ready to provide for that.

In judiciary, in the Supreme Court and High Courts we have no representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. We have to discuss that also. There is no representation in the Supreme Court. There is no representation in the High Courts. This is a very important matter but the Government is not addressing it.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Your speech is over. Other Hon. Members will also participate in the discussion. You have spoken at length. Other Members will now speak on this matter, please listen to them. You may take your seat now.

Shri Ganesh Singh ji.

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: Madam, solid measures must be initiated to create a free, fair and equal State for all Dalits who have been left out from the future as they have been in the past. Thank you.

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330

~~TEXT OF~~ CUT MOTIONS

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): I beg to move

(DISAPPROVAL OF POLICY)

THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (PAGE 310) BE REDUCED TO RUPEE 1.

1. Failure in formulating an effective policy for prevention of desertion of senior citizens by their children and relatives. (1)

(TOKEN)

THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (PAGE 310) BE REDUCED BY RS. 100.

2. Need to chalk out a separate scheme for providing special assistance for the skill development of Other Backward Classes/ denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes/Extremely Backward Classes. (2)
3. Need to provide funds to the Government of Kerala for giving free coaching to Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Class students. (3)
4. Need to launch a special scheme and allocate funds for geriatrics care (4)
5. Need to provide infrastructure facilities for old age homes (5)
6. Need to create more infrastructure facilities for disabled persons in public places (6)
7. Need to launch special programmes for disabled persons so as to make them self-reliant. (7)
8. Need to provide financial assistance to voluntary organizations working in the field of social justice. (8)
9. Need to provide financial assistance for higher education and scholarship for the students of Other Backward Classes/Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes/Extremely Backward Classes (9)
10. Need to establish training centres for ensuring skill development of disabled persons. (10)

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350-A

ADV. DEAN KURIAKOSE (IDUKKI): I beg to move

(DISAPPROVAL OF POLICY)

THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (PAGE 310) BE REDUCED TO RUPEE I. 92

2. Failure to formulate an effective policy for the protection of senior citizens at their homes. (2)

(TOKEN)

THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (PAGE 310) BE REDUCED BY RS. 100. (92) 92

15. Need for establishing training centres across the country for ensuring skill development of disabled persons. (15)

16. Need to formulate an effective policy for registration and monitoring the functioning of NGOs. (16)

17. Need for establishment of coaching centres and centres of excellence with high standard for the coaching of Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes and Extremely Backward Classes students (17)

18. Need to formulate an effective policy for preventing abuse of children and rehabilitation of orphans. (18)

19. Need to provide special package for rehabilitation of senior citizens/ widows/physically handicapped. (19)

20. Need to give free coaching to Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Class students. (20)

21. Need to provide funds for establishing old age homes in all districts in the country. (21)

22. Need to provide funds to create infrastructure facilities for disabled persons in public places. (22)

23. Need to run income generating projects for disabled persons. (23)

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330-B

SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL (JAYNAGAR): I beg to move

(TOKEN)

THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (PAGE 310) BE REDUCED BY RS. 100.

24. Need to formulate an effective policy for prohibition of manual scavenging. (24)

25. Need to prevent atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. (25)

26. Need for establishing National Institute of Mental Health and Rehabilitation. (26)

27. Need to provide adequate facilities for accounting of de-notified nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes. (27)

330-C 777

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): I beg to move

(TOKEN)

THAT THE DEMAND UNDER THE HEAD DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (PAGE 310) BE REDUCED BY RS. 100.

30. Need to allocate funds for the welfare of senior citizens. (30)

31. Need to provide funds for establishing residential facilities for unmarried elderly women. (31)

32. Need to apportion funds for provision of free treatment and diagnostic services for the elderly including palliative care. (32)

33. Need to provide advanced prosthetics including bionic limbs and auditory and ophthalmic accessories and assistive technologies at subsidized rates to persons with disabilities. (33)

34. Need to devise a national strategy to dissuade the use of narcotic and psychotropic substances among children and youth. (34)

35. Need to allocate funds to create a National Divyang Jan Investment Promotion and Credit Board to provide credit support for Divyangs Jan desirous of starting their own small and medium businesses. (35)

36. Need to formulate a policy to prevent intentional dissemination of racist and casteist slurs and ill-intended and nefarious depiction of people with physical challenges, vulnerabilities and backward classes and disadvantaged groups in media and legislate measures to fix accountability for such attempts. (36)

***SHRI AKSHAIBAR LAL (BAHRAICH):** In India, the benefits of reservation available to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes must continue to be ensured at all times, and in order to prevent any obstruction at any level in the future, this matter should be placed in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. Through the Gazette of India, THE SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES ORDER (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1976, NO. 103 OF 1976, dated 18th September, 1976, the Union Government included the Gond and Kori communities in the category of Scheduled Castes throughout the State of Uttar Pradesh. The Government of Uttar Pradesh had also issued a Government Order dated 29 August 1970, stating that the Gond and Kori communities had been included in the list of Scheduled Castes across the entire State of Uttar Pradesh with effect from 27 July 1977, and that persons belonging to these communities would be entitled to all constitutional, educational and other benefits available throughout Uttar Pradesh.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh, through its Government Order dated 3 July 2003, notified that the Government of India, by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act,

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* Speech was laid on the Table *

2002, had included the following communities in the list of Scheduled Tribes:

1. Gond, Dhuria, Nayak, Ojha, Pathari and Rajgond in the districts of Maharajganj, Siddharth Nagar, Basti, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Mau, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Varanasi, Mirzapur and Sonbhadra.
2. Kharwar and Khairwar in the districts of Deoria, Ballia, Ghazipur, Varanasi and Sonbhadra.
3. Sahariya in the district of Lalitpur.
4. Parahiya in the district of Sonbhadra.
5. Baiga in the district of Sonbhadra.
6. Pankha and Paniya in the districts of Sonbhadra and Mirzapur.
7. Agariya in the district of Sonbhadra.
8. Pathari in the district of Sonbhadra.
9. Chero in the districts of Sonbhadra and Varanasi.
10. Bhuiya and Bhuniya in the district of Sonbhadra.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes mentioned above are not being issued caste certificates even by officials and employees at the tehsil level, such as Lekhpals, Kanungos and Tehsildars, nor at the district level, even up to the District Magistrate. As a result, communities such as Gond,

Kharwar, Turaiha and the other communities mentioned above are being deprived of their constitutional rights. Students are unable to receive scholarships due to the non-issuance of caste certificates, the benefit of reservation in Government employment is being denied, and participation in the political sphere is also being obstructed. Despite the fact that the Government of Uttar Pradesh regularly issues Government Orders from time to time to Commissioners and District Magistrates, officials and employees posted at the tehsil and district levels are deliberately depriving people belonging to these communities of their constitutional rights. This has pushed their future into darkness.

I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the Commissioner of Azamgarh Division in the State of Uttar Pradesh, Sushri Kanak Tripathi, and the District Magistrate of Mau district, Shri Gyan Prakash Tripathi.

Letters submitted by public representatives are not being taken cognisance of by Kanak Tripathi, Commissioner, Azamgarh Division, Azamgarh. Decisions are being delivered in an arbitrary manner at the Divisional Appellate Forum. There is an open violation of the orders of the Government of India, the Government Orders of the State Government, and the judgments of the Hon.

Supreme Court. Even the directions of the Hon. President of India are being flagrantly disregarded.

The matter pertains to Ballia district, where a person named Umashankar Singh lodged a complaint before the District Caste Scrutiny Committee and the District Magistrate, Ballia, alleging that Shri Lallan Prasad Ram, son of late Ramkripal Ram, a resident of Ballia district, and others do not belong to the Gond community. An inquiry was conducted by the District Magistrate, Ballia, during which the caste certificate was found to be valid, and the complaint filed by Shri Umashankar Singh was accordingly rejected.

Subsequently, Another Individual, Shri Jai Prakash Maurya, Son Of Shri Jawahar Maurya, Resident Of Bansdih, Ballia, Filed A Complaint Against Shri Lallan Prasad Ram, Son Of Late Shri Ramkripal Ram, And Others Before Sushri Kanak Tripathi, Commissioner, Azamgarh Division, Azamgarh, At The Divisional Appellate Forum, Challenging The Order Of The District Magistrate, Ballia. There was no justification whatsoever for entertaining this complaint, because as per the judgment of the Hon. Supreme Court, only the same person who had filed the complaint before the District Caste Scrutiny Committee or the District Magistrate is competent to file an appeal before the Divisional Appellate Forum.

I personally held a telephonic conversation and also addressed a written representation to Sushri Kanak Tripathi, Commissioner, Azamgarh Division, Azamgarh. However, neither my letter nor my telephonic communication was taken cognisance of by her. It was also not considered appropriate by the Commissioner to even respond to the letter written by me.

Kanak Tripathi, Commissioner, Azamgarh Division, Azamgarh, took cognisance of all the letters submitted by the complainant Shri Jai Prakash Maurya, son of Shri Jawahar Maurya, resident of Bansdih, Ballia, and acted promptly on the complaints made by Shri Maurya by directing the District Magistrate to conduct an inquiry. After taking cognisance of the representations of Shri Jai Prakash Maurya, son of Shri Jawahar Maurya, resident of Bansdih, Ballia, proceedings were also initiated before the Divisional Appellate Forum, and a decision was pronounced declaring that the caste certificate of Shri Lallan Prasad Ram, son of late Shri Ramkripal Ram, was incorrect. Orders were also issued for the seizure of the caste certificate and for the registration of an FIR.

Shri Gyan Prakash Tripathi, District Magistrate, Mau, while conducting hearings before the Caste Scrutiny Committee, has been delivering decisions in several cases stating that the concerned

persons have not produced any evidence to show that they were displaced from Mirzapur Kaimur Range. However, the orders and directions of the Government of India and the State Government clearly provide that if the records of any person mention Gond, a caste certificate should be issued to them without difficulty. Prior to Shri Tripathi, the then District Magistrate, while hearing the matter before the District Caste Scrutiny Committee, had found the caste certificate of Kumari Pooja, daughter of Shri Phoolchand, to be valid. However, upon re-hearing, it was declared invalid. The present District Magistrate cancelled the caste certificate on the ground that no evidence had been produced to establish that they had been displaced from Mirzapur Kaimur Range.

By Government Order No. 7704/Chhabbees-77-17(21)74 dated 24 September 1977, the earlier provision whereby the Gond community was treated as a Scheduled Caste only in the Bundelkhand Division and in Mirzapur district south of the Kaimur mountain range was withdrawn. It was decided that Members of the Gond community would be entitled to all constitutional, educational and other benefits available to Scheduled Castes throughout the entire State of Uttar Pradesh. Orders to this effect were issued, pursuant to which Members of the Gond community continued to receive caste certificates and other facilities without

any hindrance. Subsequently, in the year 2003, the Gond community was classified as a Scheduled Tribe in 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh, namely Maharajganj, Siddharth Nagar, Basti, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Mau, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Varanasi, Mirzapur and Sonbhadra. In accordance with this classification, Members of the Gond community in these districts were receiving all constitutional benefits available to Scheduled Tribes.

By refusing to issue caste certificates to persons belonging to the Gond community, Shri Gyan Prakash Tripathi, District Magistrate, Mau, is depriving them of the constitutional benefits to which they are entitled, and fabricated facts are being brought on record. The Gond community is being arbitrarily defined separately by him, which amounts to an open violation of the orders of the Hon. President of India, the Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh. Shri Tripathi, in collusion with persons belonging to a particular caste group, is conspiring to harass Members of the Gond community, which is wholly unjustified.

I personally know and recognise Shri Lallan Prasad Ram, son of late Shri Ramkripal Ram. He belongs to the Gond community. By acting in concert with a particular caste group, Kanak Tripathi, Commissioner, Azamgarh Division, Azamgarh, and the District Magistrate, Mau, Shri Gyan Prakash Tripathi, are conspiring to

deprive the Gond community of the constitutional benefits due to them. Fabricated and misleading facts are being placed on record.

I request the Government to immediately remove Kanak Tripathi, Commissioner, Azamgarh Division, Azamgarh, and Shri Gyan Prakash Tripathi, District Magistrate, Mau, from their posts, and to annul all decisions delivered by them so far at the Appellate Forum and the District Caste Scrutiny Committee.

I further demand that the Government ensure strict and continued compliance by the Government of Uttar Pradesh with the Government Orders issued by the Union Government, and that clear directions be issued in this regard. Constitutional action must be taken against those employees and officers who have denied the issuance of caste certificates and deprived eligible persons of their constitutional benefits.

SHRI GANESH SINGH (SATNA): Madam, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

Today, I am participating on behalf of my party in the discussion on the Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

When the Government of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji was formed, the first slogan he gave was “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas”. This journey began with that mission. When he became the Prime Minister of India for the second time, he added one more phrase to it, namely “Sabka Vishwas”. The Opposition in the country is troubled as to how this Government is taking such far-reaching decisions and why, with every decision, the people of the country are standing firmly with it. This is what has left the Opposition surprised and unsettled. Within the Congress Party, once again, there is chaos, and serious allegations are being levelled against its leadership. Under the leadership of Shri Modi Ji, the country is not only reaching new heights of development, but is also succeeding in winning the trust of the people, which is the most significant achievement in the history of the nation so far.

The Opposition opposed Article 370 and Article 35A. It also opposed the CAA. The Triple Talaq Bill was opposed as well, but the people of the country stood firmly with all these decisions. A

well-planned conspiracy was carried out to incite riots in the country in the name of the CAA, the exposure of which was presented with great firmness by the Hon. Home Minister Shri Amit Shah Ji the day before yesterday.

One of the foremost objectives of the Government led by Shri Modi Ji is that the nation comes first. The resolve is to take Bharat Mata to the highest pinnacle of glory. “Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah”, Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

Madam, I now turn to the discussion on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

I have been a continuous Member of this House since 2004. I have also witnessed the Budgets of the two Governments led by Shri Manmohan Singh Ji. In those times, someone was yearning for a ray of light, while someone else carried the sun with him. Even where allocations were made, there was plunder. Other than loot and corruption, nothing meaningful took place. Under the Ministry of Social Justice, persons with disabilities, the backward classes, Dalits, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities were left yearning for the implementation of schemes meant for them. Since the formation of the Government led by Shri Modi Ji, all Ministries of the Union Government have been successfully working through new and innovative schemes to transform the standard of living of

the people of the country. Just a while ago, the discussion was underway on the Demands for Grants relating to the Railways, and it is truly astonishing to see how, in such a short span of time, development is taking place at a remarkable pace across every department and in all parts of the country.

The allocation made in the Union Budget for the year 2020–21 reflects the hopes, aspirations and the trust of the people of the country. This Budget focuses primarily on three important themes: an India of aspirations, economic development, and a caring society. For the year 2020–21, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment had sought an allocation of Rs. 13,512.78 crore from the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance has allocated Rs. 10,103.78 crore to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. In the year 2020–21, there is an overall increase of Rs. 1,218.57 crore, which is 13.71 Percent higher than the Budget Estimates and Revised Estimates of 2019–20. This clearly reflects the concern of our Government for the backward classes and Dalits.

Madam Chairperson, the Congress Government was never sensitive towards the backward classes and Dalits. By way of example, in the year 2013–14, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment had sought an allocation of Rs. 18,000 crore from the Ministry of Finance. However, the Ministry of Finance allocated only Rs. 6,065 crore to the Ministry of Social Justice and

Empowerment. Due to the cuts imposed by the then Planning Commission in 2013–14, such a reduced allocation was made to the Ministry by the Ministry of Finance. Our Government is continuously increasing budgetary allocations for the exploited, the deprived, the backward classes, the poor, senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The Congress Government, on the other hand, used to reduce their budgets. In the year 2020–21, provisions have been made under various schemes for the welfare of Scheduled Castes. Under the Post-Matric Scholarship scheme, an amount of Rs. 2,987.33 crore has been provided. Under the Pre-Matric Scholarship scheme, Rs. 700 crore has been provided. An allocation of Rs. 30 crore has been made for the Babu Jagjivan Ram Hostel Scheme. Provision of Rs. 30 crore has been made for Free Coaching. For Top Class Education, Rs. 40 crore has been provided. An allocation of Rs. 20 crore has been made for the National Overseas Scholarship. Under the National Fellowship scheme, Rs. 300 crore has been provided. Central assistance of Rs. 1,200 crore has been earmarked under the Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan. Provision of Rs. 700 crore has been made under the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana. An allocation of Rs. 100 crore has been made for assistance to voluntary organisations. Rs. 50 crore has been provided to the Scheduled Caste State Finance Corporation. For the Venture Capital Fund, Rs. 65 crore has been

provided under this Demand for Grants. In this manner, there are a total of 17 schemes, for which a cumulative budgetary provision of Rs. 6,908.33 crore has been made, which is the highest ever in history.

For the year 2020–21, budgetary provisions have been made under various schemes for the welfare of OBCs. An allocation of Rs. 1,415 crore has been made for the Post-Matric Scholarship, Rs. 250 crore for the Pre-Matric Scholarship, Rs. 35 crore for the National Overseas Scholarship, Rs. 120 crore for the National Fellowship, Rs. 50 crore for hostels, and Rs. 50 crore for assistance to voluntary organisations. A provision of Rs. 25 crore has been made under the Post-Matric Scholarship for economically weaker sections among OBCs. An allocation of Rs. 10 crore has been made for the development of nomadic communities, and Rs. 60 crore has been provided for the Venture Capital Fund for OBCs. Thus, there are a total of nine schemes for OBCs, with an overall budgetary provision of Rs. 2,015 crore.

For the year 2020–21, budgetary provision has been made for the welfare of persons with disabilities. During the year 2016–17, a budget allocation of Rs. 783.56 crore was made for persons with disabilities. In the year 2017–18, an allocation of Rs. 855 crore was provided. During 2018–19, the budgetary provision for persons

with disabilities was Rs. 1,070 crore. In the year 2019–20, a provision of Rs. 1,204.90 crore was made. For the year 2020–21, a budgetary allocation of Rs. 1,325.69 crore has been made for persons with disabilities, which is the highest ever.

The continuous increase in budgetary allocations for the welfare of persons with disabilities clearly demonstrates how sensitive our Government is towards them. I would like to briefly refer to the historical context relating to persons with disabilities. The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 was enacted, under which welfare-based provisions were made for seven categories of disabilities, with 3 Percent reservation in Government employment, 3 Percent reservation in higher educational institutions, and written examination guidelines were framed in 2013. With effect from 19 April 2017, our Government introduced a new amendment through the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, which marked a shift to a rights-based approach. Under this Act, 21 categories of disabilities were recognised. Reservation in Government employment was enhanced to 4 Percent. Eligibility was defined for 15 categories of disabilities. A 5 Percent reservation was provided for students in higher educational institutions. Legal rights, voting rights, protection against abuse, provisions relating to art, culture and sports, specified accessibility standards, timelines for offences

and penalties, special courts, district-level committees, and uniform implementation of disability certificates across the country were included. The first report under this framework was submitted to the United Nations Committee in 2015. Central rules were framed, evaluation guidelines for all 21 categories of disabilities were prepared, and the written examination guidelines were revised in 2018. Rules for persons requiring high support were notified. The identification of posts suitable for persons with disabilities was finalised. The term “Divyangjan” has been legally adopted in Indian languages to refer to persons with disabilities. Accessibility standards were notified, and compulsory education was ensured for children with disabilities up to the age of 18 years. Assistance has been provided to persons with disabilities for the purchase and fitting of assistive devices and equipment through ADIP camps, during which ten Guinness World Records were created, an achievement that has occurred for the first time in history.

Just now, Suresh Ji was asking what this Government has done. I am explaining that here. On 17 September 2016, in Navsari, Gujarat, the first world record was created when 1,200 hearing aids were fitted to 600 persons within eight hours at a single location. The second record was the creation of the largest wheelchair logo or image by 1,000 persons with disabilities. The third record was

the lighting of the highest number of oil lamps simultaneously at one place. In Imphal, Manipur, on 5 November 2016, the fourth record was created when hearing aids were fitted to 3,911 hearing-impaired persons within eight hours. In Rajkot, Gujarat, on 29 June 2017, the fifth record was achieved with the highest participation of 1,445 hearing-impaired persons performing the National Anthem together through a single sign language lesson. Under the sixth record, orthoses or calipers were fitted to the maximum number of 781 persons with locomotor disabilities in a single day. In Bharuch, Gujarat, on 28 February 2019, the seventh world record was created, where prosthetic limbs were fitted to 260 persons with disabilities. In Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, on 29 February 2010, the eighth world record was achieved by distributing the maximum number of hand-operated tricycles within one hour, totalling 626. The ninth record was the largest parade of hand-operated tricycles, with 300 participants. The tenth record was the longest moving line of wheelchairs, involving 400 participants who covered a distance of 18 kilometres. These world records are such that persons with disabilities may never have imagined that a Government would come forward, recognise their abilities, provide them opportunities to move ahead, and honour and empower them in this manner.

I would like to place before the House the scheme-wise major achievements in the disability sector under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. From the year 2009–10 to 2013–14, only Rs. 425 crore was spent. However, since our Government came to office in 2014, a provision of Rs. 1,067.32 crore has been made till date. This represents a substantial increase. During the period from 2004 to 2014, when these programmes were implemented earlier, only 12,13,459 beneficiaries were covered. ... (*Interruption*s)

SHRI JASBIR SINGH GILL (KHADOOR SAHIB): Madam, the House is not in quorum. ... (*Interruption*s) Time is not being given to speak. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Under this scheme, the number of beneficiaries from 2014–15 till now is 15,22,535 persons who have received benefits. ... (*Interruption*s) Earlier, data was not even maintained. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Do you wish to raise the issue of quorum?

SHRI JASBIR SINGH GILL: Madam Chairperson, when it comes to giving time to speak, time is not given, and at present the House is not in quorum.

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Madam Chairperson, earlier, data relating to camps for persons with disabilities was not maintained. Till now, 8,852 such camps have been organised. There was also no provision earlier for providing motorised tricycles. So far, 15,588 battery-operated tricycles have been distributed. In my Lok Sabha Parliamentary Constituency of Satna, the Hon. Minister himself had visited. This process is continuing uninterrupted. Till now, thousands of persons with disabilities have been provided with motorised tricycles, enabling them to take up employment and secure their livelihoods. They are now able to earn and support their families. They have become self-reliant. There has been an increase of Rs. 562.28 crore, that is, a growth of 147.98 Percent, in distribution. During the current year 2020–21, a budgetary provision of Rs. 230 crore has been made under the ADIP scheme.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the Report on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. It states that the population of Scheduled Castes is 16.5 Percent. According to the Mandal Commission, the population of OBCs is 52 Percent. As per the NSSO 2009–10, the OBC population is 41.7 Percent. The Mandal Commission faced several difficulties due to the non-availability of caste-based population data from the 1931 Census. In this regard, the then Chairman of the

Mandal Commission, B. P. Mandal, had written a letter dated 21 March 1980 to the then President, requesting that a caste-based census of OBCs be conducted. However, the Government of that time rejected the request of the Mandal Commission and stated that caste enumeration would not be undertaken in the 1981 Census. Since Independence, the Congress Government had decided that the population figures of OBCs would not be allowed to come before the country. This was a well-planned conspiracy by the Congress, because once the numerical strength of OBCs became evident, policies for their social, educational and economic upliftment would inevitably have to be formulated.

In the year 2020, the process of Census enumeration has commenced, but no provision has been made for the enumeration of OBCs. During previous years, this Hon. House had been assured that an OBC Census would be conducted in the year 2020. I would like to ask the Government what are the reasons for not conducting the OBC Census. I am not speaking about caste enumeration. I am speaking about a class. The backward class is a class, just as there are Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, similarly OBCs constitute a distinct class. I am speaking about the enumeration of a class. It is a matter of concern that during the last five years, there has not been a single financial year in which the entire allocated

amount for OBC welfare has been fully utilised. One of the reasons for this is that in order to avail the benefit of the Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for OBCs, the parental annual income should not exceed Rs. 2.5 lakh. While the income limit for non-creamy layer OBCs has been fixed at Rs. 8 lakh, for availing benefits under the Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme and other schemes, the parental annual income limit for OBCs continues to be Rs. 2.5 lakh. This limit should be enhanced to Rs. 8 lakh, so that their children may genuinely benefit from these schemes.

For the purpose of dividing OBCs into Backward Classes, Extremely Backward Classes and the Most Backward Classes, the Justice Rohini Commission is working on the basis of scientific and objective criteria. For this, it is essential that caste-wise and reliable data relating to OBCs is available with the Commission. However, the Department of Personnel and Training does not have caste-wise data of OBC officers and employees. On what basis, then, will the Justice Rohini Commission undertake the classification of OBCs? This is difficult to comprehend. There should be a dedicated OBC Sub-Plan.

Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that of the amount allocated to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in the Union Budget, 72.5

Percent is earmarked for Scheduled Castes. Of the remaining 27.5 Percent, allocations are made for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, NGOs and OBCs.

From this, it can be inferred that OBCs, whose population exceeds 52 Percent, receive an allocation of less than 10 Percent. Since the OBC population is more than 52 Percent, I demand that a separate Sub-Plan for OBCs be provided in the Union Budget in proportion to their population, so that OBCs do not continue to face budgetary constraints. NITI Aayog has also recommended this. The OBC Committee of NITI Aayog has made this recommendation.

Now I would like to speak about the creamy layer. I have also read the report of your Committee. It mentions that today a large number of IAS posts are lying vacant within the creamy layer category. Even posts in Category B are vacant, and it is stated that suitable candidates are not available. On the one hand, it is said that candidates are not available, and on the other hand, restrictions are imposed because of the creamy layer, and now further classification is being carried out. As a result, a large number of Group A and Group B posts in the Government of India remain vacant. Fifty-six IAS candidates have been selected and have even been awarded IAS, but their postings have not been made because they have been brought within the ambit of the creamy layer, even though they are

children of Group C and Group D employees. My demand is that the concept of the creamy layer should not be applied so long as there is a backlog or vacant posts in the country. Until these posts are filled, the provision of the creamy layer should be withdrawn. This is extremely necessary.

Similarly, the issue of hereditary occupations also arises. A Committee was constituted under the Ministry of Law and Justice, which had recommended that communities engaged in hereditary occupations such as potters, carpenters, blacksmiths, oil-pressers, barbers and others should be kept outside the ambit of the creamy layer. However, these communities have also been brought within the creamy layer. What kind of justice is this? I demand of the Hon. Minister that justice be done to these communities.

At the present time, our Government has undertaken substantial work in the field of social justice. By constituting the National Commission for Backward Classes and granting it constitutional status, our Government has accomplished a historic task that had remained pending for many years. Injustices and discrimination faced by backward classes across various departments are now being heard, examined and addressed. The process initiated by the Government and Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas is needed the most

by the backward classes and Dalits. Efforts are being made through various schemes to transform their standard of living. I urge the Hon. Minister to consider these issues in depth, so that the maximum number of people may benefit. Those who are genuinely deprived, backward, Dalits and vulnerable, and who truly need the support of the Government, must receive assistance. New provisions should be formulated to ensure that such people are effectively supported.

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak.

[English]

***ADV. DEAN KURIAKOSE (IDUKKI):** The Budget 2020-21 has given a significant push to social sector with enhanced allocations for welfare schemes and a renewed emphasis on education for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other vulnerable sections of the society including Senior citizens, transgenders and beggars.

Alcohol consumption is disproportionately higher among socially marginalised groups, notably SC/ST. It is mainly associated with a range of social and economic consequences that are rooted in historical oppression and social discrimination. Hence, I request to the Government to formulate a policy to reduce the tendency of alcohol usage among the marginalised groups.

I also request the Government to kindly incorporate the following issues:

Need to provide state wise specific package for rehabilitation of senior citizens/widows/beggers;

Need to allocate adequate funds for providing free coaching for SC/ST and OBC students to equip them to win various entrance and competitive examinations;

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* Speech was laid on the Table

Need to provide infrastructure facilities for the convenience of disabled persons in public places.

*** SHRI D.K. SURESH (BANGALORE RURAL):** In recent years there has been growing concern that adequate resources are not available for persons with disabilities and for implementation of new legislation related to their needs and rights. Hence, a significant increase in allocation for disability-affected persons was needed and expected in the Union Budget but the recently presented Budget has failed to live up to these expectation and needs. What is even more difficult to understand is the reduction made in some important allocations.

During the last four years the Budget of the Department for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities has amounted to just 0.04 per cent of the total expenditure of the Union Government. This is clearly very inadequate, in fact shockingly so, and should be increased significantly. An allocation amounting to 0.04 per cent of the total expenditure of the Government is grossly inadequate to fulfil the demands. Additionally, it must be noted that the allocations for the department have remained constant for the last three years. On top of it there have been some difficulties to understand the reductions.

It is to be noted that almost all schemes that lead to the participation of persons with disabilities such as assistance to

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* Speech was laid on the Table

Disabled Persons for purchasing/fitting of aids/appliances (ADIP), Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) show a declining trend. The Research and Rehabilitation Institutes as well as the Institute of Sign Language find no allocation this financial year. The Scheme for Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA) finds a reduction of Rs 63.50 crores when compared to 2019-20 (Budget Estimate).

Although there is also an increase in the allocation for Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme, various reductions are a cause for serious concern. This review adds that the specific allocation by the Department of Health and Family Welfare also sees a decreasing trend in this year's Budget.

The Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension is the only social security benefit offered by the Union Government. It is obvious that a small increase of Rs. 50 crore from 2019-20 (BE) will not do justice to the aspirations of persons with disabilities for an adequate standard of living. It would also not adhere to the CRPD committee recommendations to compensate the additional costs of disability as well as ensuring an adequate standard of living or the budget commitments to design social protection systems in lines with international standards.

The Union Government through this department has the mandate to implement the international laws such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and other international commitments. It is the responsibility of the Government to oversee their implementation across the country.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has made some important recommendations to the Government. The committee has specifically made recommendations for resource allocations in many sections of the recommendations in September 2019. That includes an action plan for implementation of the convention and the legislations in the country by adopting policy efforts with adequate human and financial resources; Adequate allocation of financial resources for the removal of barriers and inclusive information for enabling participation of persons with disabilities, allocation of financial resources to ensure inclusion in basic public services and support for all children with disabilities, including in early childhood, ensuring accessible early development centres for all children; To arrive at a de-institutionalization plan; Provision and enhancement of sign language interpreter services; Reaching out all services, accessibility of infrastructure in rural areas ; and introduce and ensure that all persons with disabilities access entitlements to cover

disability-related extra costs, disability pensions, and strengthen identification procedures for accessing pensions and increasing pension wages. But unfortunately, the Government failed to address the recommendation of the committee.

The specific allocation by the Department of Health and Family Welfare sees a decreasing trend in this year's budget. However, it is to be noted that majority of allocation has gone to Psychiatric Institutions, which is highly debated within the disability movement as there is a lack of transition plan for persons with psychosocial disability to live in the community on an equal basis with others.

The Department of School Education has an inclusive education component under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. However, disaggregated data for the current year is not yet available. As programms get subsumed under larger schemes of the Government, data on disability gets invisible. This is a key issue in ensuring accountability and monitoring. To conclude, it is time that the Government comes up with an action plan with financial commitments involving the sectoral Ministries and Departments as recommended by the CRPD committee in order to "Make the Right Real" for persons with disabilities. Clearly much higher allocations for the welfare and empowerment of persons with disability are needed. Therefore, I urge upon the Govt to allocate more funds for the empowerment of persons with disabilities. Thank you.

* **SHRI P. R. NATARAJAN (COIMBATORE):** India has been ranked at the 103rd position among 119 countries on the Global Hunger Index In 2017. India is ranked below many neighbouring countries, including China (25th spot), Nepal (72), Myanmar (68), Sri Lanka (67) and Bangladesh (86).

When this Government came to power you have promised, to improve the conditions of Anganwadi workers and helpers. But after coming to power it has drastically cut down the budgetary allocation for Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme. The NITI Ayog, which has replaced the Planning Commission, has recommended winding up many of the centrally sponsored schemes. The Modi Government has drastically cut down the share of funding by the Government of India for such schemes. Attempts to handover schemes like ICDS and the midday meal programme to NGOs and private players have strengthened. More funding wants to be allocated in this sector.

The rape vulnerability for girls or women is almost twice today to what it was 17 years ago, according to data provided by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). Although the list of crimes is very long, we can take measures to ensure women's safety in our country. Firstly, the Government must make stringent laws

* Speech was laid on the Table

that ensure the punishment of criminals immediately. Fast track courts must be set up so that the victim gets justice instantly.

DR. T. SUMATHY (A) THAMIZHACHI THANGAPANDIAN (CHENNAI SOUTH): Thank you very much, Madam, Chairperson, for allowing me to participate in this discussion on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. I am privileged to participate in this discussion since I hail from the State of Tamil Nadu, a pioneer State, which has held the virtues of social justice and empowerment right from its Justice Party days.

Madam, I would like to open up my discussion with a saying by a famous German playwright and poet, Bertolt Brecht, who has said, "What kind of times are these, when to talk almost about a tree is a crime because it implies silence about so many crimes?" Are these lines not very apt, Madam? In the aftermath of the Delhi riots, by keeping quiet against any kind of injustice, you are again doing injustice in terms of upholding social justice. They say the Battle of Waterloo, wherein Napoleon was defeated, was won by the Etonians, meaning the students who graduated from the School of Eton in London. Similarly, the battle for social justice was won, back in Tamil Nadu, by three legendary Dravidian reformists -- Thanthai Periyar, Perarignar Anna, and Dr. Kalaignar.

Madam, when I come to the definition of social justice, I am reminded of these three legendary reformists who had upheld these virtues and the baton has now proudly been carried on by my Party

President, Thalapathy M.K. Stalin with more fervour and commitment to all the causes espoused by the champions for this avant-garde movement like Ambedkar and Baburao Phule. When I look into the definition of social justice, I would like to quote what the definition says. The social justice is a political and philosophical concept which holds that all people should have equal access to wealth, health, well-being, justice, and opportunity. When we take stock of the aftermath of the Delhi riots, I would like to ask, through you, Madam, that whether all the people have had access for their protection of their lives, whether they have had access to protect their wealth, whether there was justice meted out equally to all the citizens of Delhi, and whether all of them had the equal opportunity to safeguard their lives. The synonyms for social justice are fairness, equity, and integrity. My first demand in this is whether there is fairness in the justice meted out to all the citizens of Delhi.

Madam, I know pretty well that I need to talk about the Demands here. But at the same time, to reflect upon the term social justice, is very important in this juncture because -- I would like to quote and I quote, “because social justice assigns the rights and duties in the institutions of a society which enable people to receive the basic benefits of cooperation. Social justice helps us works towards celebrating diversity in our communities and countries.” Do we really celebrate diversity in this country now? Suppressing

all voices of democratic protests and plural voices, is the present deplorable scenario here.

Madam, in Europe, great revolutionaries and rationalists like Voltaire and Rousseau took almost 50 years to awaken their countrymen and prepare them for a revolution. But our Thanthai Periyar took just 20 years to achieve social justice in Tamil Nadu wherein in other countries, all the reformists and rebels have taken centuries to achieve such aims.

Madam, I would like to place it on record the track record of all the achievements that Tamil Nadu has done in the field of social justice and empowerment. The First Constitutional Amendment of Article 15 Clause 4 -- that gives powers to Government to provide reservation in education -- was done due to the relentless fight in Tamil Nadu way back in 1950. Dr. Kalaignar continued to protect the constitutional rights of SCs, STs, minorities, backward, and most backward communities by following 50 per cent reservation. He was instrumental in getting the inner reservation for Arunthathiyar community. When our Party President, Thalapathy M.K. Stalin was the Minister for Local Bodies and Administration, he was instrumental in filling-up all the vacancies which were reserved for the inner reservation of the Arunthathiyar community, particularly for the women vacancies in an effective way.

Dr. Kalaignar was the first one to propose and implement reservation for destitute women, physically challenged persons, and for the transgenders. He brought the 33 per cent reservation for women in local bodies, and 30 per cent reservation for women in Government jobs. The Tamil Nadu Government during his days and at present, provides 69 per cent reservation, for which the then Chief Minister, Dr. Kalaignar was instrumental.

Madam, they say that all are equal, but some are more equal than others. In order to have a fair and balanced equality, I urge the Government to bring a reservation Act for OBCs, SCs, and STs and to place it in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. I am proud to remind here that the Government of Tamil Nadu, headed by Dr. Kalaignar, was the first Government to create a separate Ministry for Backward Classes way back in 1969.

I wish to bring to the notice of this august House a matter of very urgent importance. The three-Member expert committee on Creamy Layer for OBCs is needless and unwarranted since we already have a constitutional body, the National Commission on Backward Classes to look after the OBC's related issues.

15.00 hrs

It is sad to note that in that Committee not a single Member is from the OBC. To determine a creamy layer on the basis of salaried

income only and to remove Groups A and B is unjustifiable and could eliminate the deserving candidates belonging to the OBCs. That is why, our dear Dr. Kalaignar called the creamy layer as the `*kirumi'* layer'. `*Kirumi'* in Tamil means virus in English. The Government has totally ignored the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Welfare of OBCs dated 9.3.2019. *(...Interruptions)* Madam, I am the only speaker from my Party.

Therefore, I urge the Ministry to reject the three-Member Expert Committee and advise the National Commission on Backward Classes to look into the issue of various posts in Public Sector Undertakings and on creamy layer. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. I wish to record the grave injustice being done to the OBC students in the seat allotments of MBBS and Post-Graduate medical seats under all India quota. Though this issue relates to the Ministry of Health, I want to record this in the discussion under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment since this is a problem related to the implementation of social justice.

The 27 per cent reservation mandated by the Government for the OBC students has not been implemented by the Medical Council of India in all India quota seats. This has to be taken note of and the Health Ministry has to take a decision to extend 27 per cent reservation to OBC students and should file in a reply in the

Supreme Court. I have got the data about the lack of funds allotted to the post-matric scholarship as well as pre-matric scholarship to all the students. It has to be increased. The inadequate budget allocation under these schemes is because of the gap between the funds decided by the Ministry of Social Justice and those approved by the Ministry of Finance. It should be bridged.

Madam, justice delayed is justice denied. The implementation of reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs in higher educational institutions, funded by the Centre, was delayed by 15 years after the announcement while the same for EWS was done within a month of its announcement. This disparity should be set right. Again, the Ministry of Social Justice has created Dr. Ambedkar Foundation and allotted funds. We are happy and it is a welcome move. Similarly, the Government has to create Thanthai Periyar Foundation for furthering the ideology and message of Thanthai Periyar.

Madam, coming to the issue of empowerment of women, we are now in the millennial era talking about empowerment but way back in the 4th century BC when Aristotle was lecturing to his students that women were subjective to men and that men were rulers and women were subjects, it was Augustine, a woman who disguised herself as a man and became the world's first women doctor. Who was Plato's teacher? It was Miletus Aspasia who was

a woman, celebrated as the first lady of Athens. But here, in this, even after the Government having declared the year 2001 as the year of Women Empowerment, we are still fighting for 33 per cent reservation for women. Is it not a shame? I wish to place on record that reservation is our birth right. It is neither a concession nor any alms given as mercy to us. We want minimum, not maximum, 50 per cent reservation and the Government should take steps to implement the 33 per cent reservation. Dr. Kalaignar implemented 50 per cent reservation for women in urban and local bodies. So, Tamil Nadu is the first State to do so in the whole country.

Madam, right is its own defence. I wish to urge the Ministry, through you, to allot more funds for the persons with disabilities. There are 70 million people with disabilities and are physically challenged. The funds allocated is only Rs. 330 crore. The Government should increase the allocation. Also, the funds for the Deen Dayal Disabled Rehabilitation Programme should be increased. Under the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana, I have adopted a village by name Sitalapakkam. I urge the Central Ministry to put pressure on the State Government because the Government of Tamil Nadu has sent back the *Nirbhaya* Fund without properly utilising the whole amount.

It is a shame on the AIADMK Government for not having fully utilized the funds.

I would like to conclude my speech again with Brecht who said:

"Those who take the meat from the table teach contentment.

Those for whom the taxes are destined demand sacrifice.

Those who eat their fill speak to the hungry of wonderful times to come.

Those who lead the country into the abyss call ruling too difficult for ordinary men."

With these words, I conclude my speech.

SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL (JAYNAGAR): Madam, I rise to speak on the Demands for Grants pertaining to Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2020-21.

15.06 hrs (Shri Kodikunnil Suresh *in the Chair*)

Sir, social justice is a concept of a society in which every human being is treated justly, without discrimination based on financial status, race, gender, ethnicity and caste in the country. Eradication of this discrimination must be accompanied with empowerment which will ensure a healthy society. Need of the hour is to turn this mere concept into a reality. It will be unfair to say that proper steps are not being taken by the Government, but they are not sufficient. Innumerable schemes being formed on paper are not the solution of unjust happenings in the country.

A key to the solution is proper implementation, just like quality is preferred over quantity. Of all the things that are so crucial not only for India but also for the entire world is women's participation. Until and unless little girls are educated and provided opportunity to prosper in life, social justice will never be achieved. Social justice is also incomplete till the time when people are identified by their contribution to the society and not by their caste. Justice is nowhere near when manual scavenging is still going on. The day

when Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan will be fully accomplished, then only we can say that absolute justice in Indian society is no longer a dream. But till then, social justice and empowerment seem to be an unachievable utopian concept.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the incidents which are disturbing for the entire nation. Firstly, according to the information forwarded by the National Dalit Movement for Justice and the International Dalit Solidarity Network to the UN Human Rights Committee in July, 2019, while the reporting of crimes against Dalits and Adivasis has risen over the decades, there has not been an equivalent rise in the rate of disposal of cases by the police and courts under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Pending cases of crimes against Scheduled Castes have nearly doubled from 8,380 cases to 16,654 cases in a decade. In the case of crimes against Scheduled Tribes, pending cases of investigation have risen by 55 per cent, from 1,679 cases to 2,602 cases, a submission to the UN said. At the same time, it said, in courts, crimes against SCs pending trial rose by 50 per cent over the decade from 85,264 to 1,29,831. In 2016 alone, for which the latest figures were available, 40,801 new crimes against Dalits were registered under the Prevention of Atrocities Act. Less than 15,000 cases completed trial that year. Forget about the

empowerment, there is no justice even after so many schemes being taken up by the Government.

Secondly, a survey conducted by the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation has reported 45,000 manual scavengers in 170 districts across the county. The year 2019 recorded highest number of deaths in the prohibited profession of manual scavenging. There is no reported conviction under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 since its enactment. Yet, the allocation in this year's Budget, that is, Rs. 110 crore for the Self Employment Scheme for rehabilitation of manual scavengers is equal to that of the last year.

Thirdly, the Denotified Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes (DNT) are overlooked once again in this year's budget. The DNTs are a heterogenous group engaged in various occupations such as transport, key-making, salt trading, entertaining acrobats, dancers, snake charmers, jugglers and pastoralists. Well, the problem lies at the root that they are not even accounted for in the census. The development of DNTs across six years shows a slow growth while the budget allocation is slightly increased in 2018-19 from Rs. 6 crore to Rs. 10 crore. It has been stagnant since then. It is significant to note that the actual expenditure for each year has been below the budgetary allocation showing the inability of DNTs to avail of

funds and resources meant for them. Most of them are accounted under the SCs and STs but getting a certificate for the same is difficult for them as they are asked for a proof from 1950s.

I would like to request the Hon. Minister through you Sir that the Government must look into this issue as they have an estimated population of ten per cent of the total population of India. Since the constitution of the Renke Commission to the Idate Commission, there has been no improvement in the situation of DNTs.

Fourthly, the tribal communities remain vulnerable to displacement because of mining, dams and other large infrastructure projects. Distressing incidents of bonded labour also came up in 2019. A man named Kashi was rescued along with 27 others including ten children. They belong to the Irula community, a particularly vulnerable tribal group. Due to the unbearably poor condition, they had to borrow petty amounts and non-repayment of those amounts led to this condition. This is nothing less than slavery. Kashi’s case was brought to the notice of the authority by Released Bonded Labour Association but none of the culprits was booked under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. The very next day, the rescued group was threatened to join back. This is not the nation we are trying to build. Several loopholes in the system not only favour the offenders but also promote them to commit even more severe crimes.

Fifthly, the Union Government's allocation for the inclusion of persons with disabilities through the Department for the empowerment of persons with disabilities remain 0.04 per cent compared to the total expenditure of the Government during the last three financial years. The Budget documents reveal that allocation for Institute for Sign Language, Institute for Research and Technologies for Persons with Disabilities, and assistive devices both ADIP and ALIMCO has been reduced. There is no mention or provision for enhancing services in rural areas. There is only a marginal increment to RCI which is responsible for producing the pool of experts to work with persons with disabilities. The expansion of quality habitation and rehabilitation services in rural areas will never see the light of the day with this marginal increase of Rs. 0.50 crore. Neither the Government lives up to the aspiration of the persons with disabilities nor is there an obligation to consider and fulfil the recommendation of the CRPD Committee that was released in September, 2019. The gaps identified by the NSSO survey released in December, 2019 are also ignored.

Coming to the immediate steps that the Government should take immediately, firstly, overall, the Demands for Grants for the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities should be increased. Secondly, the Centre's contribution to pensions of disabled persons must be increased. It continued to remain at a

meagre of Rs. 300 for the past several years whereas in the State of West Bengal, the Hon. Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee provides assistance of Rs. 1000 per month through the Manobik Scheme. Disability certificates are being distributed through organising medical camps.

Number three, the National University for Rehabilitation Sciences and Disability Studies announced in 2015, and the National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation promised in 2016, are yet to see the light of the day and demand allocations.

More funds are to be allocated for proper implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 as the suicide rates in India are continuously rising. More funds and impetus for the field of rare diseases is required immediately. It is also necessary to ensure that the Schemes and Programmes are being implemented properly.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL: I am concluding in just one minute.

The Government must also fill up the backlog vacancies amounting up to 7,782 for SCs, 6,955 for STs, and 10,859 for OBCs in six departments. The information for other departments is not even available.

I would like to conclude by saying that rising walls to hide poverty and pouring water into the River Yamuna for welcoming dignitaries is a petty and temporary solution. It is equivalent to mocking the people of our country. Small steps which give permanent solution must be opted by the Government. It is also the responsibility of the fellow citizens to discharge their duties humanely. Thank you.

SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA (KANDHAMAL): Hon. Chairperson Sir, at the outset, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to you for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for 2020-21.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Minister, Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot*ji* for taking up phenomenal welfare initiatives in a time-bound manner, under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi*ji,* the Hon. Prime Minister of India. I think, he knows poverty, he has lived through it, he knows that there is a lot to be done for the upliftment of the downtrodden sections of the society to whose betterment Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar*ji* was committed, and he is doing it every single day. He understands it, and is committed to social justice. The time has changed. Whether you are in power or in Opposition, what matters is that one should come for people's help. His Government is doing the same.

We strongly appreciate that the Budget, 2020-21 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, Shrimati Nirmala Sitharaman*ji* has given a decisive push to social sector with enhanced allocations for welfare schemes, renewed emphasis on education for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and emphasis on the welfare of vulnerable sections of the society, including senior citizens, transgenders and beggars.

We definitely laud and appreciate the 14 per cent increase in the Budget allocation for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. I believe that the biggest increase in scholarship schemes for meritorious students from SCs, STs, and OBCs across the Ministries is a testimony of commitment to social justice. I strongly believe that the difference between insignificance and prominence is the bridge of opportunities. Given opportunities and access, anyone can excel. I once again congratulate the Government for this step. To add to it, we appreciate the vision of the Government that the vibrant India shall be a caring society which shall attend to its weak, old, and vulnerable among its citizens.

Now, I would like to highlight some points regarding the State of Odisha. Our Hon. Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Patnaik*ji* charted Odisha's remarkable turnaround, which was once India's most backward State. He still remains, by far, the tallest Leader of the State. He remains unwaveringly focussed on the development of the State, and pursues it with relentless zeal through his social security schemes that bring social justice and empowerment. His motto of being attentive to the requirements of the people by always keeping ears open to their problems and trying to deal with them as effectively as possible, is the reason behind the success of his measures in Odisha. The Schemes like Kalia, Madhubabu Pension Yojana, Mamata Scheme, Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana, Biju Krushak

Kalyan Yojana, Mukhyamantri Swasthya Seva Mission, Barista Nagarika Tirtha Yatra Yojana, and Kalinga Sikhya Sathi Yojana cover almost 70 per cent of the 4.5 crore people of the State. It is an example for other States.

Again, under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, programmes that have seen the highest increase include Pre-Matric Scholarship for Children of Workers involved in Manual Scavenging, Fellowships for OBCs, Overseas Fellowships for OBCs, Renewed Thrust on Fighting Drug Abuse, and Care of Senior Citizens and Rehabilitation of Beggars. A National Action Plan for drug demand reduction with an allocation of Rs. 260 crore has been introduced. This is very important and needed. We deeply appreciate the National Action Plan for Senior Citizens which has also seen an increase of 400 per cent in budget allocation from Rs. 40 crore to Rs. 200 crore.

The Union Budget was woven around three prominent themes – Aspirational India, Economic Development for All, and Building a Caring Society. Achieving any of these would require extraordinary efforts on the social sector front starting with allocating additional resources for health, education, nutrition, employment guarantee, and also social security schemes.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA: Sir, I am the only speaker from my party and I have been told that 10 minutes have been allocated for our party.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: No; your party has been allotted only five minutes. Anyhow, you continue.

SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA: Sir, the allocation for the social sector this year once again fails to deliver for the country's poor and marginalised the way it is supposed to.

Now, I come to some other points which really deserve further attention from the Government. Year after year, the allocated budget for the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme has been recording shortfalls and the Ministry has time and again indicated that this adversely affects the beneficiaries. Even this year, only Rs. 2,987 crore and Rs. 1,415 crore have been allocated for the Scheduled Cases and Other Backward Classes respectively, which is a very small improvement from the Budget Estimates of last year. The Ministry should be allocated substantially more sum so that arrears can be cleared and fresh eligible beneficiaries can be identified under this Scheme.

Sir, it is deeply saddening to know that there are nearly no candidates selected under the National Overseas Scholarship Scheme since its inception in 2016. This has also led to under-

utilization of the budget under this scheme. So, I urge the Ministry to make additional efforts through advertising or take up an exclusive outreach programme to ensure that more people are made aware of the benefits under this Scheme.

It is a terrible truth that manual scavenging is still existing in this country and news of manual scavenging deaths are reported extremely frequently. This is a social evil that has to be eliminated at the earliest and the Ministry should put in a considerable effort to eradicate this. All agencies and bodies of the Government at all levels at the Centre and States should be informed to make notification to prohibit manual cleaning of manholes and strict penalties should be imposed on any contractor who employs manual cleaners. The amount sanctioned under the Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers should be utilised best to rehabilitate these affected people and a one-time cash benefit should be provided to help them start a new life of profession. To eradicate the practice of manual cleaning of sewer systems or septic tanks, allocation of Rs. 10,103 crore to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2020-21, as against Rs. 8,885 crore given to it in 2019-20 is extremely important. But how it reaches the beneficiaries is really critical.

The allocation made for SC Boys and Girls Hostels has been extremely low for the past few years and even during this year, there

has not been any substantial improvement. In the last few years, approximately 40 hostels have been sanctioned and there is no data as to how many of them are functional. Education is very important and hostels form the backbone of educational accommodation. This allocation does not help the backward youth of the country, and so, I urge that the Ministry may allocate a substantial sum to truly help the beneficiaries belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes. Similarly, Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana is a good scheme, but only Rs. 1 crore has been allocated for it.

About persons with disabilities, there is 2.8 crore disabled population in the country, but here also, the allocation is not enough to fully take care of them.

Lastly, I would like to quote what Martin Luther King said. He said

> "Life’s most persistent and urgent question is,
> “What are you doing for others?"

This Ministry has been taking active steps, but the logistics of how it reaches the beneficiaries is the most important aspect.

With these words, I conclude. Thank you.

*** SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SADANAND SULE (BARAMATI):** The budgetary allocation to the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2020-2l is Rs. 10,103 crore, which is just a mere 0.3% increment over spending by this department in 2018-19.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana, Central Sector Scheme that provides physical aides and Assisted living devices for senior citizens suffering from Age Related Disabilities/infirmities belonging to BPL Category. Under this scheme, just Rs. 1 crore is allocated for spending in 2020-21, compared to Rs.106 crore spent in 2018-19 on physical aides. Through this scheme, many elderly with disabilities from my Baramati constituency benefitted over the years and my constituency Baramati is one of the top performing constituencies in the functioning of this scheme. These assisted devices help the differently abled people to have easy mobility and improve their integration into society. Given the immense benefits of this scheme, I request the Centre to increase the budget allocation for this scheme to at least Rs.150 crores. In the 2020-21 budget, no funds are allocated to schemes and programmes responsible for preventing alcoholism, substance and drug abuse.

Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for Programmes Relating to Aged: The Scheme provides financial assistance upto

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* Speech was laid on the Table

90% of the project cost for running and maintaining day-care centres, old age homes, mobile Medicare units etc. Also, for a scheme that subsidises provision of old age homes for elderly, no allocation is made this year, compared to Rs. 100 crore spent in 2019-20.

Budgetary allocation for post-matric scholarship for SC students reduced by almost 50% from Rs.5,928 crore in 2018-19 to Rs.2,941 crore in 2020-21. Total amount of funds spent on educational empowerment of students from Scheduled Castes is reduced by 39% from Rs. 6803 crore in 2018-19 to Rs. 3742 crore in the budgetary allocation for the Department of Empowerment of persons with Disabilities is Rs. 1325 crore in 2020-21.

The budgetary allocation for the Department of Employment of Persons with Disabilities is Rs. 1325 crore in 2020-21: Under the Scheme for implementation of Persons with Disability Act, financial assistance is provided to various bodies set up by the Union Government and State Governments to support activities relating to accessible India campaign and implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, particularly relating to rehabilitation and provision of barrier-free access. The funds allocated under this scheme to make India accessible to differently abled persons is reduced by 20% from Rs. 315 crore in 2019.20 to Rs. 251 crore in 2020-21. Total amount projected to be spent in

2020-21 under National Program for Welfare of Persons with disabilities, reduced to Rs. 655 crore in 2020-21 from Rs.688 crore of budget allocation in previous year.

Regarding allocation to denotified tribes (DNT), while the budget slightly increased in 2018-19 to 10 crore from Rs 6 crore, it has been stagnant since then. It was significant to note that, the actual expenditure for each year has been below the budgetary allocation, showing the inability of DNTs to avail of funds and resources meant for them. Based on the Renke Committee report of 2018, not much has changed with respect to the impoverished status of denotified tribes since the Renke Commission (2008) Report. The 2008 report which submitted its report in 2008, highlighted that 50 per cent of DNTs lacked any kind of documents and 98 per cent were landless. In such a situation while the Government has been on an overdrive in accumulating citizen's data through Aadhaar and now NPR, these are of no use to those who need proof of their identities the most.

Post matriculation scholarship demands exceed allocations: while there has been an increase in budget allocations for scholarship schemes for meritorious students from SCs, STs and OBCs across ministries indicating the Government's emphasis on education for vulnerable sections of society, it is still not adequate to meet the current demand.

According to the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment for 2019-20, the schemes were already underfunded. For 2019-20, the department had sought Rs 14,871.37 crore but received only Rs 8,885 crore. This “adversely affected the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SCs and Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for OBCs”, noted the report. It also states: “It is evident that the requirements of this department are much more to provide Scholarships, than allocation actually provided to them.” Just Rs 2,926.82 crore had been allocated to the post-matric scholarship scheme for SCs this year, against a demand of Rs 7,125 crore. Consequently, there was already a shortfall of Rs.4,198.18 crore. There is therefore a more significant allocation that is required to be allocated.

Maharashtra-Disbursement of funds under the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for students belonging to Scheduled Tribes. In Maharashtra, the State Government is implementing the post matric scheme to provide financial assistance to the Scheduled Tribe students Studying at post-matric or post- Secondary stage, Under the scheme Central and State share is 75:25. For the year 2017-18, anticipated expenditure under the scheme was Rs.22411.94 lakh out of which the Centre is required to provide Rs.16808.95 lakh. A proposal for the disbursal of these funds had been submitted to the Government of India through a State Government letter dated 18

April 2017. The Government of India has only released Rs.3623.75 lakh grant by a letter dated May 2017. However the remaining grant is still pending for sanction by the Government of India. If there are schemes that provide for scholarships, but the funds are not provided or sanctioned in time, then budgetary allocations remain only in name and not in action.

Allocation for persons with disabilities – as per the 1995 legislation and not the rights of the persons with disabilities, Act 2016: There has been a marginal increment of Rs. 122.77 crores from the budget estimate of the Department for the empowerment of persons with disabilities for the financial year 2019-20. It is to be noted that almost all schemes that lead to the participation of persons with disabilities such as Assistance to Disabled Persons for purchasing/fitting of aids/appliances (ADIP), Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) show a declining trend. The Research and Rehabilitation Institutes and as well as the Institute of Sign Language find no allocation this financial year. Scheme for Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA), which is looking at accessibility and district rehabilitation, finds a reduction of Rs.63.50 crore when compared to 2019-20 (BE).

The budget allocates around Rs 251 crore towards the implementation of the 1995 Act, which only covered seven disabilities, and not 21 as mentioned under the new Act. A National Fund has been constituted to secure finances towards proper implementation of the Act of 2016, but the lack of budgetary allocations around it have rendered it meaningless. The Accessible India Campaign (AIC) which is one of the flagship programmes for accessibility does not find any mention in the Budget. Although the AIC was successful more on the level of creating a noise around accessibility, its vision was not translated on the ground due to lack of accountability framework and transparency. While hopes were pinned on its better implementation, lack of a financial framework has made it defunct.

[Translation]

***SHRIMATI RAMA DEVI (SHEOHAR):** My Committee has prepared reports relating to the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities under this Ministry, and the same were presented in both Houses on 3 March.

In the report relating to the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Committee found that during the year 2019–20, the Department was allocated a budget of Rs. 8,885 crore, and up to 31 January 2020, the Department had utilised only Rs. 5,740.19 crore, which amounted to 64.6 Percent of the allocated funds. The Committee expressed regret over the surrender of the remaining unutilised amount and over the failure to utilise the allocated funds in a timely manner for the Scheduled Castes Division, the Backward Classes Division and the Social Defence Division. The Committee also expressed the hope that the Department would be able to utilise the allocated funds fully before the end of the financial year.

My Committee has recommended to the Department that Parliamentary Constituency-level committees should be constituted, and that the participation of the Member of Parliament

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* Speech was laid on the Table *

of the concerned Parliamentary Constituency should be ensured in such committees. This is because local representatives are in a position to monitor the receipt and utilisation of funds for schemes being implemented by the Department for the welfare of Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, senior citizens and persons with disabilities in their constituencies, and they are also familiar with the ground realities of these initiatives.

With regard to the Babu Jagjivan Ram Hostel Scheme, which is intended to construct hostels for Scheduled Caste students and facilitate better educational opportunities for them, the efforts made by the Department so far have been found to be disappointing. Consequently, the Committee has recommended that the Department should expedite its work so that the scheme may succeed in achieving its intended objectives. Further, for more effective implementation of the scheme relating to the prevention of alcoholism and substance abuse, the Committee has recommended that the Department should identify substance-dependent persons, including those at traffic intersections and other such locations, and take corrective and rehabilitative measures for their welfare.

Similarly, from the Demands for Grants of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for the year 2020–21, it is evident that the Department was initially allocated a budget of

Rs. 1,204.90 crore, which was subsequently reduced to Rs. 1,100 crore. However, the actual expenditure up to February 2020 was only Rs. 669.90 crore.

Accordingly, the Committee observed that the pace of expenditure during the first three quarters of the financial year was considerably slow and that nearly 40 Percent of the budget remained unutilised. Therefore, the Committee has desired that the Department should prepare a draft proposal of its major schemes for use by district-level and State-level officials, which may serve as a guideline document for effective implementation.

Under the ADIP scheme, which provides assistive devices to our brothers and sisters with disabilities, ALIMCO is a Government undertaking engaged in the manufacture of such aids and appliances. In order to maintain and improve the quality of assistive devices and equipment manufactured, healthy competition is essential. Therefore, the Committee has suggested that the Department should consider preparing a list of other competent agencies engaged in the manufacture of these devices to compete with ALIMCO. This would not only lead to an improvement in the quality of production but would also help in reducing costs.

The Committee has observed that there are approximately 42 lakh schools in the country, most of which are located in remote and

difficult areas. Since students with disabilities have an equal right to study alongside other students, the Committee has urged the Department to ensure that every school in each region is geo-tagged. This would ensure that no school or teacher is left out of the training modules developed by the Department, and that no child is deprived of education in these schools due to disability.

***SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK):** At the outset let me first ask, why some are poor? The answer is, they are denied opportunities. Because of inequality in the distribution of income among people, poverty has arisen. Depravity of opportunity is the cause of poverty. Moreover, extreme or absolute poverty, experienced by those whose income is barely sufficient for survival, remains widespread in our country. Extreme poverty and the suffering, it entails affect a large proportion of humankind, and major efforts by Government and international organisations to reduce or eradicate poverty have thus failed to produce the desired results.

Do these facts and trends suggest a regression in social justice? The answer to this question, if considered within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not unequivocal. The persistence, aggravation and very existence of extreme poverty constitute an injustice. Those experiencing dire poverty are deprived of a number of the fundamental rights invoked in the charter and enumerated in the Universal Declaration. Hunger is but one face of poverty; discrimination poor health, vulnerability, insecurity and a lack of

* Speech was laid on the Table

personal and professional development opportunities are among the many other challenges faced by the poor.

Unlike justice in the broad sense, social justice is a relatively recent concept born of the struggles surrounding the industrial revolution and advent of socialist views on the organisation of society. In our country, Government through its programmes and schemes is striving to build an inclusive society wherein Members of the target groups are provided adequate support for their growth and development.

When I am putting my views on the Demands for Grants on Social Justice and Empowerment 2020-2021. As this Ministry is responsible for the welfare and empowerment of certain disadvantaged sections of the society such as Scheduled Castes; Other Backward Classes, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, victims of substance abuse and transgender persons, it implements various schemes and programmes for the welfare of disadvantaged sections. I come to know that this year the funds allocated for the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment the upcoming financial year has a decline of around 11 percent, Rs.8885 crore from Rs.9963.25 crore which is the revised estimates in 2018-19. On a cursory look into the funds allocated, it is found that the extent of under-utilisation has been 18% in 2013-14. However, in 2016-17 the under utilization was down to 1%. In 2017-18 the Ministry

revised estimates expect expenditure to be 1% more than the budgeted allocation.

One of the reasons for under utilization is lack of expenditure of funds by the North East States. It is marked that there is failure on the part of North Eastern States to send their utilization certificates within time, leading to lapse of funds and low demand for funds from these states. In 2019-20 Rs.8885 crore was budgeted but Rs.5740.19 crore were utilised by 31st January, 2020 which was 64.6 percent of the total allotted funds. By 15th February, 2020, the utilisation increased to Rs.6644.85 crore which became 74.79 percent of the total allocated funds as RE was Rs.8885 crore, why there is this uneven pace of utilisation of funds? Why is it so slow in the first three quarters of the year. Almost 35 percent of the budget remained unutilised despite the revised instruction of the Ministry of Finance that Ministry and Departments could only utilise only 25 percent of their BE in the last quarter of the financial year. It is learnt that late submission of UCs and non-receipt of complete proposals are the main reasons for the delay in full utilisation of allocated budget, can't there be a guideline issued stating that release of every instalment of funds to States there should be a deadline for submitting UCs.

Take for example the case of utilisation of the resources by the Scheduled Caste Division since 2017-18 which shows that in the

year 2017- 18 and 2018-19 Rs.34.18 crore and Rs.21.67 crore were surrendered due to non-utilisation of the funds. Similarly, in the year 2019-20 out of Rs.6135 crore, this Division could utilised Rs.3980 crore only, till the end of January 2020, leaving the rest Rs. 2155 crore to be spent in the remaining two months of the financial year. That means 35 percent of the allocated resources remained unspent till the end of January 2020. The spending pattern of the Backward Classes Division shows that it has surrendered Rs.65.69 crore in 2017-18 overspent Rs.22 crore in 2018-19 and spent Rs.1174 crore out of Rs.1833 crore in the year 2019-20 till the end of January 2020, leaving the rest Rs.659 crore to be spent in the remaining two months.

I would like to draw the attention of the Minister relating to Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC Students which is one of the oldest and most important scheme with the objective to provide financial assistance to SC students to enable them to pursue post matric education. It is always found that funds are not released due to lack of complete proposals by the State authorities in time.

A suggestion has been mooted by the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment that similar to the Committee created by Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways for every Parliamentary Constituency be created so that local representatives become well aware of the ground realities of their constituencies.

They can monitor the progress of the schemes and programmes and become aware about the welfare of SCs, OBCs, Senior citizens and other targeted groups.

It is learnt that a proposal for transferring funds directly into the Bank accounts of SC students under Direct Benefit Transfer is still awaiting approval of the Cabinet. It needs to be pursued vigorously. It is also learnt that a proposal is there before the Committee to increase the share of the Centre from 90:10 to 60:40. This only look as an extra burden on them. Construction of hostels for Scheduled Castes students is not working. The Department is unable to spend the allocated money which depicts a dismal picture. Except Kerala, which has established 100 hostels and the rest are just sprinkling, it's very disappointing. Can we know the reasons why other States could not do it?

One is also alarmed that after a lapse of three years since 2016, Transgender Persons are yet to receive any support from the Government. Hardly any money been allocated. There is a need for higher allocations for the welfare of Transgender community. There is a need to provide a separate scheme for OBCs so that they can improve their skill and can be gainfully employed.

I am aware that National Action Plan for Skill Training for PWDs under SIPDA was launched by the Department in

collaboration with Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship(MSDE) in 2015 with the objective of training PWDs to enable them to have gainful employment. However to my utter dismay, even after reducing the beneficiary target from 50,000 to 20,000 beneficiaries in February, 2020 for the year 2019-20, the Department could only provide skills to a miniscule 457 beneficiaries in the first three and half quarters of the fiscal. You may be confident of achieving the target in terms of number of trained beneficiaries in the light of MIS Portal being developed by it, but it is a herculean task that in the remaining part of the financial year and even have set an revised target this year appears to be difficult. Nonetheless, I would urge the Government to strive for it and also strengthen the employability of the beneficiaries after they complete the skill training. It would be better to maintain the data of beneficiaries who got employed after getting skill training under the programme and use this data as input for future streamlining of the scheme, if need be.

I would like to draw the attention of the Minister towards District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) which were started as outreach activity of the Ministry for providing comprehensive services to the PWDs at grassroot level and for facilitating creation of the infrastructure and capacity building at the

district level for awareness generation, rehabilitation and training of rehabilitation professionals.

It has come to light that as of now 325 districts have been identified for setting up of District Disability Rehabilitation Centres(DDRCs) and out of 325 identified Districts, DDRCs have been set up in 264 districts. The funds have been released only to 92 Districts for the last four years and current year. Can the Government tell us the specific reasons for non-functioning of large number of DDRCs set up and the specific measures taken to address them?

DDRCs of Tripura and Sikkim even do not have complete address available in the Ministry's Annual Report? This scheme needs to be revisited and be recast so that it can become workable.

It is gratifying to note that Government has generated and issued 32.50 lakh Unique Disability Identity (UDID) Cards in 682 districts and have started a drive further to speed up the generation of UDID Cards. It is also found that 1.5 crore Legacy Certificates have been taken on board in the Unique Identification Cards System, an online Portal. Now States are required to just upload the revalidated Certificate to generate a UDID Card and medical examination will be required only for newer disabilities listed in new RPWD Act, 2016. Even for that, the procedure has been

streamlined and norms for constitution of medical teams have been relaxed. However, performance of some States is still quite poor, for instance in Manipur only 737 cards were issued as against grant of Rs.28 lakh and in West Bengal a total of 4 cards were issued against Rs. 3 lakh funds. Many States and UTs, like Bihar, Assam, Telangana, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh etc. did not receive any funds till 2018-19. In this connection, I would appreciate the Department initiation of a colour coded daily performance report with indicated level of performance of lagging States/UTs and following it up with States/UTs/ Districts on daily basis to monitor the progress made by them. I hope that Department will continue with their efforts to bring all the States and UTs on board and complete the project at the earliest.

There has always been a demand to have a caste census in the country. Last caste census was done in 1931 which is around 90 years ago. This is required because as provisions are being made for upliftment of disadvantageous section of the society the administration should get the data, factually correct data of the targeted group. I urge upon the Government to take steps to include more column in the question when Census in numeration is done of every citizen.

Reservation is nothing else but positive intervention to help the society to grow. No nation can grow, when a large section of the

Society languish in poverty because of deprivation. The country has come a long way indeed during last some decades. It should be continued.

SHRI RAGHU RAMA KRISHNA RAJU (NARSAPURAM): Hon. Chairperson, I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this very important subject, that is, Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2020-21.

In this regard, I really appreciate the efforts of our Hon. Minister, Shri Thawar Chand Gehlot-ji for getting an increase of 14 per cent in this trivial situation, where financial crisis is there. Despite that, with his zeal and commitment, he has been able to get 14 per cent increase in allocation. I really appreciate him. We have the leadership of our beloved Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi-ji, who has come from the lower level to the highest level in the country, and who has been the role model not only for the country but also for the world. His initiatives are very well reflected through the Hon. Minister in these Demands for Grants.

While I say so, I would like to bring in a few suggestion that are needed. We have the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana for the elderly people in our country. We have close to 10.5 crore elderly people wherein 70 per cent of them have been residing in rural India. This is a good scheme to supply them kits, handsticks, and little automation devices for their wellbeing at that age. Our culture says that we all must respect our elders. The way how we respect our elders is to take care of them in the best manner. But unfortunately,

the budget allocated for such a good scheme has been drastically reduced to Rs. 1 crore.

I would sincerely urge our Hon. Minister with good heart that let us remember them, and increase this budget allocation to the required levels. It is the need of the hour.

I really appreciate that they have increased the budget allocation for prevention of manual scavengers by 400 per cent. For every scheme including Pre-Matric Scholarships and Post-Matric Scholarships, there has been a very good increase in the budget allocation.

Sir, here, I would be failing in my duty if I do not mention about my beloved leader, Shri Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, who has brought in several reforms with regard to the upliftment of BCs. Just to cite an example, in the recent Rajya Sabha elections, out of four seats, two seats were given to BCs. We have given up to 59 per cent reservations for BCs and SCs. That way, as a great social reformer – though he is the youngest Chief Minister in the country – he has come up with various reforms where in all the temples and elsewhere, he has given 50 per cent reservations for OBCs and SCs.

That way, in the modern age, while we talk of great reformers like Jyotirao Phule-ji and Ambedkar-ji in the past, now I would not hesitate -- though he is a very young man – to praise my leader for

bringing in these kinds of schemes for the upliftment of EBCs in a genuine manner.

For such a young Chief Minister, I would also seek the support of the Union Government by going through various such schemes.

There is one important point though it may not be directly relevant to the Demands for Grants. But earlier also, I had made a representation to the Hon. Minister, and I would like to reiterate it here. It is with regard to the same subject. There is a community by name Turpu Kapu, Gajula Kapu in our State, who predominantly reside in the northern part of coastal Andhra in the Vizag, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram Districts. But for their livelihood, some of these people have started migrating to other Districts. The same community, which is in the serial number 19 in the List are considered as OBCs only in the three Districts. But whoever has gone to other Districts for their livelihood, are being considered as forward caste people. The father is there as OBC, but his sons or grandsons, who are staying in Vijayawada or some other District for livelihood, are being treated as forward caste.

It is very unfair, Sir. We have brought this to the notice of the Hon. Minister earlier. He has responded very positively. Some commission has to be formed in this regard. Though this is not the right forum yet I request the Hon. Minister to kindly consider this

issue which is a major issue and as a State, we cannot do this. The State has also made several representations. I urge the Minister to kindly consider this.

We are all with you as far as the Demands for Grants are concerned. Thank you so much.

[Translation]

SHRI DULAL CHANDRA GOSWAMI (KATIHAR): Thank you, Chairperson Sir.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of these Demands. While participating in the discussion on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2020–21, I would like to state that this is an extremely important Ministry. The Ministry functions with great sensitivity towards the problems around us and bears a significant responsibility for the empowerment of socially, educationally and economically neglected sections of society, while addressing their concerns.

In this direction, our Hon. Minister Shri Thawar Chand Gehlot Ji has been efficiently and successfully managing the responsibilities of this Ministry, even during the previous Government. We congratulate him for his administrative competence. The manner in which he has worked while keeping in mind all sections of society is commendable. Recently, the Government organised a parade of approximately two kilometres involving 300 tricycles for persons with disabilities, followed by a parade of 400 wheelchairs, and further, 626 tricycles were distributed within one hour by the Hon. Prime Minister Ji, thereby

setting a world record. For this achievement as well, I commend the Department and the Union Government. This initiative symbolises harmony and justice. I once again thank the Government for this.

Sir, Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes, senior citizens, third gender persons affected by alcohol and substance abuse, beggars, denotified and nomadic tribes, DNTs, the economically backward class EBC and the economically weaker sections EWS are all included within the ambit of this Ministry. They have great expectations from the Government, particularly in those States which still lag behind in the race for development. Along with accelerating development works in such regions, it is essential that the Union Government implements special assistance schemes for the weaker sections, as is being done in Bihar. In our State of Bihar, the Hon. Chief Minister has ensured that all senior citizens are covered under the Old Age Pension Scheme.

Hon. Minister, one of the most significant features of this scheme is that even if both husband and wife have attained the age of 60 years, both are covered under its ambit. I would like the Union Government to implement this important scheme across the entire country. In particular, senior citizens, destitute elderly persons, widows, persons with disabilities, denotified and nomadic communities, as well as third gender persons, should be included in this scheme so that they may find it easier to sustain their

livelihoods. I would also like to submit one more point to the Hon. Minister. At present, an old-age pension of Rs. 500 is being provided. We urge the Union Government to increase this pension amount to at least Rs. 1,000. The continuous increase in the Ministry's budget over the last six years clearly reflects the Government's sensitivity towards the upliftment of weaker sections. The allocation of more than Rs. 1 lakh crore for the current year is truly commendable.

Sir, for the upliftment and welfare of society, particularly of Scheduled Castes and all sections of the economically backward classes, the Union Government is implementing schemes under as many as 223 programmes. Through these initiatives, the Union Government is undertaking significant work to bridge the social divide that had developed over time. In the same manner, there is a need to pay special attention to the OBC category as well. They too remain behind in the mainstream of development, and special schemes are required to ensure that they are accorded an equal place in society.

The Government has also adopted a fairly flexible approach with regard to eligibility for scholarships and has provided relaxation in income limits. This is a highly commendable step. I would like to mention here that under the Chief Minister's Rural Transport Scheme in Bihar, the State Government provides a grant

of up to Rs. 1 lakh, or up to 50 Percent subsidy, to SC, ST and OBC beneficiaries for the purchase of a small commercial vehicle for livelihood purposes.

Another important point is that under the Chief Minister's SC, ST and OBC Entrepreneurship Scheme, the Government of Bihar provides a loan of Rs. 10 lakh, out of which Rs. 5 lakh is given as a grant, and the remaining Rs. 5 lakh is to be repaid without any interest. This is undoubtedly a significant step towards the upliftment of these sections of society. I would urge the Government of India to adopt a positive approach in this regard and to consider replicating and adopting this scheme of the Government of Bihar at the national level.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to two more important issues. There are persons with mental illness in our society who are found wandering here and there, separated from their families and relatives. I urge the Government of India to establish special shelter homes for such persons with mental illness, where they can be housed collectively and provided with proper treatment. Such facilities should be set up at the district level. This is certainly a matter of serious concern for a civilised society and for all of us. Similarly, with regard to beggars, we often see that they reside in public places, whether at railway stations or other locations, and survive through begging. In this regard, the

Government of Bihar, under the leadership of the Hon. Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar Ji, has undertaken commendable work. The State Government has formulated a Beggary Prevention Policy in Bihar and is making significant efforts in this direction.

In conclusion, I would like to place before the House an important matter which is significant for the entire country as well as for this House, and for this I seek a little time. In the year 2020–21, the Census is to be conducted, including the socio-economic Census. This Census is of great importance. I urge the Government that the forthcoming Census should include provisions for caste-based enumeration. This would enable the collection of accurate data regarding various castes and sections of society, and such data would, in future, prove helpful in formulating and implementing schemes for the development of the weaker sections of society. After the year 1931, and since Independence, a caste-based Census has not been conducted again. I therefore request the Hon. Minister and the Government of India to ensure that a caste-based Census is undertaken.

I would like to add one small point. The State from which I come is Bihar, and in Bihar there are two or three such communities facing this issue. One is the Kisan community, and its synonymous occupational group is the Krishi Vaishya Chasaut. The term Chasaut refers to those engaged in agriculture. While the Kisan community is receiving the benefit of reservation, the Krishi Vaishya Chasaut community is not receiving such benefits. Similarly, there is the Rajvanshi community, which receives the benefit of Scheduled Tribe status in West Bengal, but does not receive the same benefit in the State of Bihar. Therefore, so that injustice is not done to these communities, they too should be extended the benefit of Scheduled Tribe status. This would enable their development in the same manner as other Scheduled Tribe communities. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

[English]

*__SHRIMATI SUMALATHA AMBAREESH (MANDYA):__ I would like to highlight some of the significant issues to draw the attention of the Government.

As far as welfare of Senior citizens and elderly persons is concerned the Government is taking various steps, But there is a need to ensure the effective implementation of the schemes for elderly persons. As we are all aware that there has been a steady rise in the population of older persons in India. The number of elder persons has increased from 1.98 crore in 1951 to 7.6 crore in 2001, and 10.38 crore in 2011. The projections indicate that the number of people in the age group of 60+ in India will increase to 14.3 crore in 2021 and 17.3 crore in 2026.

The traditional norms and values of the Indian society taught us on showing respect and providing care for the aged. However, in recent times, society is witnessing a change in the joint family system, as a result of which a large number of parents are being neglected by their families exposing them to lack of emotional, physical and financial support. These older persons are facing a lot of problems in the absence of adequate social security. This clearly reveals that ageing has become a major social challenge and there

* Speech was laid on the Table

is a need to provide for the economic and health needs of the elderly and to create a social milieu, which is conducive and sensitive to the emotional needs of the elderly.

Hence, I would like to urge upon the Government to take all necessary measures to ensure that the Senior Citizens are provided the basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities to lead happy and comfortable life in the fag-end of their life.

As per the Census 2011, in India, out of the 121 crore population, about 2.68 crore persons are 'disabled' which is 2.21% of the total population. In an era where 'inclusive development' is being emphasized as the right path towards sustainable development, focused initiatives for the welfare of disabled persons are essential. This emphasizes the need for strengthen the existing mechanism to deal the issues pertaining to persons with disabilities in the country. People with disabilities are vulnerable because of the many barriers we face: attitudinal, physical, and financial. Addressing these barriers is within our reach and we have a moral duty to do so. There is a need to unlock the potential of so many disabled people to provide them an opportunity to contribute to the world. So, I would like to impress upon the Government to make sure that the persons with disabilities are provided access to health,

rehabilitation, support, education, and employment-and they get the chance to shine.

The Government has introduced various scholarship schemes to Promote education by covering the basic costs of Studying, tuition fees or providing financial help to students. There are several Scholarships for Students from schooling and college studies. Namely pre-matric, post-matric some scholarships are for undergraduate, postgraduate courses and PhD level. However there is a need to have a rationalization in giving scholarships to students. Government should ensure that every deserved student are recognized for his or her talent and fulfil their educational needs. It should be made available to all category of students including girls, minority students, college students etc., Apart from this adequate provisions for funding for the scholarship should be made by the Government.

The Government has implemented Free Coaching scheme to enable students to clear the competitive exams and secure job opportunities. The scheme is targeted towards providing coaching of quality education for economically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to enable them to appear in competitive examination and succeed in obtaining an appropriate job. However, there is a need for enhancing the funds for the scheme to make sure that the scheme is available to all

eligible candidates in the country. Even after 7 decades of independence and in spite of various measures taken to improve the level of education in the country, literacy levels among Backward classes, particularly among women, continues to be low.

The Government has taken several measures to improve the literacy rate among women and as a result considerable progress has been achieved in improving the level of literacy and education in the country. However, there is still a long way to go before respectable levels of literacy are achieved. It has been recognized that educational and economic support for Backward Classes has not been adequate and there is disparity between Backward Classes and the non- backward sections of the population at every level.

The position of women in terms of literacy among OBC's population is also a cause of concern. Considering the important role of women in shaping the size of the family and outlook of its Members, investment in improving education among women of these communities will not only improve their social and economic status, but will also help in accelerating the socio-economic development of these communities and the nation as a whole. It is self-evident and universally accepted fact that education is one of the key instruments of effective development of weaker sections. The education facilities are not evenly distributed throughout the country. Many a times students from rural areas especially those

belonging to weaker sections have to give up their educational pursuits for the reason that adequate hostel facilities are not available for them in the quality education centers. Hence, I would like to request the Union Government to enhance the allocation of funds for construction of Hostels for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) Boys and Girls.

In my Parliamentary Constituency Mandya district in Karnataka more than 50% hostels don't have own buildings. They are running in the rented accommodation. In Mandya district there are 49 Pre-Matric Boys hostels and 16 Pre-Matric Girls hostels are functioning. Out of them 32 boys hostels and 7 girls hostels have own buildings. Remaining 25 hostels for both Pre-Matric boys and girls are running in rented buildings. The construction work of 1 boys and 3 girls hostels are in progress. However there is a need to take steps for construction of 13 boys and 8 girls hostels. As far as Post-Matric boys and girls hostels are concerned 23 boys and 21 girls hostels are there, among them only 9 boys hostels and 4 girls hostels are functioning in own buildings. Remaining 14 boys and 17 girls' post- matric hostels are running in the rented buildings. Of them construction of 2 boys and 4 girls post-Matric hostel are under progress. However, 25 hostels buildings for both boys and girls are yet to start the construction. Therefore, I would like to request the Union Government to kindly take necessary steps to start the

construction of hostels with allocation of funds as all these hostels have got allotted the required land for construction of hostels. I hope the Government will take immediate positive measures in this regard.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRISH CHANDRA (NAGINA): Hon. Chairperson Sir, I express my gratitude to you for giving me the opportunity to present my views on the Budget for the financial year 2020–21 sought for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the amounts demanded in previous years and the amounts actually sanctioned by the Government. In the year 2016–17, an amount of Rs. 106.47 crore was sought from the Government, but only Rs. 65.66 crore was sanctioned. Similarly, in the year 2017–18, the amount demanded was Rs. 103.56 crore, whereas the Government sanctioned only Rs. 69.08 crore against it. In the year 2018–19, a demand 12 Percent higher than that of 2017–18 was made, and the Government sanctioned Rs. 77.50 crore. The sole purpose of placing these figures before the House is to highlight that, on the one hand, the population is growing at an explosive pace day by day, while on the other hand, the funds allocated for social welfare and public interest appear grossly inadequate, like a drop in the ocean. In this context, the Department or Ministry spends about 38.7 Percent of its total allocated budget on the Post-Matric Scholarship scheme.

Sir, in the year 2018–19, the Budget allocated to the Ministry was reduced by 10.4 Percent compared to the Revised Estimates of 2017–18. I apprehend that this time as well, the Government may recommend allocations only after revising the Estimates downward. Through you, I would like to request the Government that on this occasion, the allocations should not be reduced at the stage of Revised Estimates. Under the Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers Scheme, the funds that were allocated in previous years have been utilised one hundred Percent. For this, I would like to thank the Government. The Government should not curtail the funds provided under such heads. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been constituted to uplift the deprived sections of society and to integrate them into the national mainstream.

Sir, through you, I would like to request the Government to provide enhanced financial support to the Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Foundation functioning under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, so that the all-round development of the oppressed, Dalits and backward sections of society may be ensured. In this context, I would like to point out that in previous years, the Foundation had been implementing a scheme known as the Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Library Scheme, which primarily benefited children belonging to economically weaker sections, the poor,

Dalits and backward communities. The Government has since discontinued this scheme. I submit that if the Government is genuinely committed to the holistic development of the people, the Library Scheme should be revived without delay, and adequate funds should be earmarked separately for this purpose.

Sir, I would certainly like to submit to the Government that when the Bahujan Samaj Party was in power in Uttar Pradesh, our Government ensured zero-balance admissions for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students and enabled them to pursue professional courses such as BTech, MTech, LLB and MBBS.

However, today, students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who are pursuing education are not receiving scholarships from the Government. As a result, this oppressed and marginalised section of society, particularly Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students, is facing serious difficulties in continuing their education. I would like to point out that even those students who have completed their education have not received their scholarships in schools and institutions in Uttar Pradesh, which has cast a shadow over their future. Keeping the interests of these children in mind, I would urge you to convey to the Government that scholarships for all eligible students in Uttar Pradesh should be released without delay, so that the Government may meaningfully contribute to their education and secure their future. Thank you.

***SHRI ANIL FIROJIYA (UJJAIN):** The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 was enacted with the objective of preventing atrocities and discrimination against persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Under this Act, several provisions were made to ensure that these communities receive equal status in society and that all necessary measures are taken to provide them every possible assistance.

Special arrangements were made for the trial of offences committed against them so that they could present their grievances openly and fearlessly. Recently, unrest was witnessed with regard to the SC/ST Act when the Hon. Supreme Court introduced certain changes in its provisions, which were perceived as weakening the Act. However, our Government, firmly committed to preventing atrocities against our Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe brothers and sisters and to ensuring justice for them, along with the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, promptly brought an Amendment Bill before the House and strengthened the provisions to secure justice for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. As a result, in some parts of the country, certain elements, without properly understanding the

* Speech was laid on the Table

Bill, attempted to incite opposition from behind the scenes. Nevertheless, owing to the firm resolve and strong will of the Hon. Prime Minister, the amended provisions continue to stand strong even today.

Not only this, by demonstrating that this Government represents every section of society, the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Minister Shri Thawarchand Gehlot Ji made arrangements for 10 Percent reservation to safeguard the rights of lakhs of economically weaker families among the general category. The most significant aspect of this step was that it required an amendment to the Constitution of India, which was carried out through the Government's firm political will, thereby giving concrete expression to the spirit of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. In my view, this is a revolutionary step taken by the Government. The amendments made to protect the rights of Scheduled Castes are also a highly commendable initiative.

I state with great pride that this is a Government which is determined to ensure that lack of money does not become an obstacle in the education of meritorious Scheduled Caste students. In this direction, the Government has extended a scholarship of Rs. 1,17,56,352 to Shri Surendra Pal, son of Shri Jaspal Ji, thereby shaping the future of a poor but deserving student.

I have with me several such examples, numbering in the hundreds, where the Hon. Minister has, under the aegis of the Department, provided financial assistance amounting to lakhs of rupees to poor youth for their education, enabling them to attain excellence in higher education. For the current financial year, a budgetary allocation of Rs. 10,104 crore has been approved for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

In the current financial year, our Government has made a budgetary provision of Rs. 2,987.33 crore for the Annual Action Plan for the year 2020–21. It is proposed that this allocation be integrated with other scholarship schemes of the Ministry under the Prime Minister's Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme, known as PM YASASVI, for a Vibrant India.

Provision has been made for free coaching for SC and OBC students so that they may succeed in securing suitable employment in the private sector. A Central Sector scholarship scheme for top-class education for SC students has also been provided. Along with this, I would like to place before the House a few demands from my constituency and the people of my region. States such as Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are predominantly inhabited by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For the people of these regions, adequate coaching facilities should be arranged for

preparation for UPSC, PSC, Army, Navodaya and NDA examinations.

In these areas, the number of hostels is inadequate, due to which students face considerable difficulties. Therefore, I request the Hon. Minister to kindly increase the number of hostels.

***SHRI ASHOK MAHADEORAO NETE (GADCHIROLI CHIMUR):** I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji and the Hon. Finance Minister Shrimati Nirmala Sitharaman Ji, because this Budget appears to be different from the conventional approach. Instead of populist announcements, the Budget has been focused on agriculture and farmers, as well as on the poor and the middle class.

Under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has, over the past several years, empowered neglected and diverse sections of society through its various programmes relating to educational, economic and social development. These include Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, senior citizens, and persons affected by alcohol and substance abuse, so that they may lead active, secure and dignified lives and fulfil all their basic needs. In fact, the Government has made tireless efforts to ensure equal opportunities for the development of all these sections, which is truly commendable.

Our Constitution, under Article 38, lays down that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting, as effectively as it may, a social order in which social,

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* Speech was laid on the Table

economic and political justice shall inform all the institutions of national life. It further mandates that the State shall endeavour to minimise inequalities in income, and also endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only among individuals but also among groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.

Articles 41 and 46 of the Constitution further embody the principle that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education, and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, disability and other cases of undeserved want. It also enjoins upon the State a special responsibility to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

I am pleased to state that under the leadership of Hon. Shri Narendra Modi Ji, the Government has undertaken unprecedented work in all these directions, which is truly commendable. Indeed, the vision of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is to build a society in which the target groups are able to lead useful, secure and dignified lives with adequate support for their prosperity and development. Its objective is to support and empower its target

groups through programmes of educational, economic and social development, as well as necessary rehabilitation. In this direction too, the action plans of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment have been remarkable.

While strongly supporting the Demands for Grants allocated to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2020–21, I would like to submit that the Gadchiroli–Chimur Parliamentary Constituency is the largest tribal Parliamentary Constituency in the country, spread over an area of nearly 700 kilometres. This region is extremely backward and is a densely tribal-populated, Naxal-affected area. In this tribal region, along with tribal communities, more than one lakh people from the Bengali community have been residing peacefully for several generations since 1962 as part of a rehabilitation process. Among them, the number of people belonging to the OBC category is also quite substantial.

Non-tribal persons living in this region lead lives similar to those of tribal communities. All of them are extremely backward from social, economic and educational perspectives. While the Government has provided facilities such as housing to improve the standard of living of the Bengali community, non-tribal persons residing in tribal areas, who have been sustaining their livelihoods by cultivating land under long-standing occupation, have not been

able to obtain permanent land allotment titles due to the strict enforcement of existing rules. As a result, they have been deprived of Government facilities such as irrigation and other essential services.

In my tribal Parliamentary Constituency, poor non-tribal persons belonging to the Bengali community and OBCs have, for a long time, been demanding that just as land titles were granted by the Government to tribal people for the land they were cultivating in tribal areas, similar relaxation should be provided in the rules for Bengali and OBC non-tribal persons. Their lifestyle is similar to that of tribal communities, and if the land under cultivation by them is allotted in their names by granting suitable relaxation in the existing rules, they too would become eligible for Government facilities such as irrigation. This would significantly improve their standard of living.

Therefore, there is a need to grant relaxation in the rules relating to the allotment of land titles to Bengali and OBC residents living in tribal regions, particularly in the Gadchiroli–Chimur tribal Parliamentary Constituency, and to provide them land titles in the same manner as tribal communities, so that they may also benefit from Government facilities and achieve socio-economic upliftment.

NITI Aayog has identified 117 districts across 28 States of the country as Aspirational Districts, which include Gadchiroli, a tribal-dominated district of Maharashtra that is completely affected by Naxalism. Along with ensuring the rapid and effective transformation of these districts, the programme also emphasises enabling people to fully participate in the developing economy. The key focus areas under this programme include health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure.

However, in the heavily Naxal-affected, tribal-dominated district of Gadchiroli, which has been included as an Aspirational District, this Government programme is not being implemented effectively. As a result, development-related activities in this Naxal-affected tribal district have come to a complete standstill. The district is not progressing towards development in accordance with Government policy, and the serious problem of Naxalism continues to persist in the area.

If the above-mentioned Government programmes are implemented in the Aspirational District of Gadchiroli with seriousness and full commitment, the district will certainly move on the path of development, and the problem of Naxalism will also be effectively addressed.

Therefore, Union Government schemes should be implemented in an effective manner in Gadchiroli as an Aspirational District.

In conclusion, while strongly supporting the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, I thank the Government and also make a humble request that all the issues relating to my Parliamentary Constituency, as raised above, may be considered sympathetically and appropriate steps be taken to allocate funds for their redressal.

[English]

***SHRI RAJU BISTA (DARJEELING):** I wholeheartedly support this budget, which is by far the most inclusive budget in the history of our nation.

This budget has given a definitive push to the social sector and increased the budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment by 14% and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs by 7.5%. The allocation of Rs 10,103.57 crore to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for 2020-21, as against the Rs 8,885 crore given to it in 2019-20, shows the commitment of our Government towards ensuring the welfare of all marginalized people across our nation. This budget has fixed Rs 85,000 crore for the welfare of scheduled castes and other backward classes (OBCs) and Rs 53,700 crore for scheduled tribes. In order to eradicate the practice of manual scavenging, this budget has increased pre-matric scholarships for children of workers involved in manual scavenging by 400%. Fellowship for OBCs has been increased by 71.4%, and overseas fellowships for OBCs have been increased by 133%.

As a youth representative, I am grateful that the increased allocation for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment underpins the three prominent theme-based visions that you have

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presented, outlining the roadmap for our country to move forward in Aspirational India— which seeks to transform the standard of living for our people. Economic Development—which means rethinking our economy with greater private participation—and Caring Society—which is both humane and compassionate.

The vision that you have presented to us will not only lay a strong foundation for the growth of our country but will also have a lasting impact on the future of our nation.

I represent the Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency. My constituency has one of the highest ratios of SC, ST, OBC, and economically backward sections of people. Even though it is one of the most resource-rich constituencies, it is also one of the most deprived. The majority of the people here depend on working in the tea gardens, where they are only paid Rs 176 per day. They don’t have any other source of income. Because of this, many meritorious students from our region are forced to quit their education, as their parents are unable to afford the cost of education.

All schools of higher learning are situated in towns like Darjeeling, Siliguri, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik, Bijanbari, Matigara, Bagdogra, and Phansidewa, while students come from far-flung rural regions, walking to school. There is a place called Jangapana in Kurseong, where students walk 6 hours each day to

reach their school and back. Students from Dhotrey and Miling are forced to leave home at 5 AM in the morning so that they can reach their school in Ghoom at 9 AM. Imagine the plight of a student who has to traverse these difficult mountain terrains during high monsoon rains just to reach their schools. Because of all this, many students from economically and socially marginalized families have given up their educational dreams. Given this, I request the Hon'ble Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment to kindly construct hostels for the students from marginalized communities in various town centres like Darjeeling, Siliguri, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik, Bijanbari, Matigara, Bagdogra, and Phansidewa so that they can continue their education and fulfil their dreams. I also request the Hon'ble Minister to kindly allocate additional resources for children from the mountain regions so that they can find a level playing field in terms of education and career.

I am also hopeful that the Hon'ble Minister Thawarchand Gehlot ji will kindly address these issues confronting the Darjeeling hills, Terai, and Dooars region, to enable our youth from socially and economically marginalized families to dream bigger.

***DR. VIRENDRA KUMAR (TIKAMGARH):** The work of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is to build and strengthen an inclusive society in which the deprived and backward sections are able to lead useful, secure and dignified lives with adequate support for their growth and development. Its objective is to assist and empower its target groups, wherever necessary, through programmes of educational, economic and social development and rehabilitation.

The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment aims to empower the socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged sections of society, including Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, senior citizens, persons affected by alcohol and substance abuse, transgender persons, beggars, denotified and nomadic tribes (DNTs), economically backward classes (EBCs) and economically weaker sections (EWS).

A National Action Plan for Demand Reduction of Drugs (NAPDDR) has been formulated and implemented, with the objective of reducing the adverse consequences of substance abuse through a multi-pronged strategy of education, de-addiction and rehabilitation for affected individuals and their families. This is a commendable initiative. Many young people across the country

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have benefited from this scheme, have been prevented from falling into the trap of substance abuse, and many others have successfully come out of addiction.

Through research and entrepreneurship, efforts are also being made to empower Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women and youth by promoting Dalit entrepreneurship, skill development and capacity building. This includes research on entrepreneurship, empowerment initiatives, and assessment of the impact of various Government schemes on the socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, among other related areas, with the aim of strengthening and uplifting these communities.

The Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration seeks to encourage and commend newly married couples who take a socially courageous step through inter-caste marriage, and to provide them with financial incentives so that they may establish their household at the beginning of their married life.

The concept of empowerment of persons with disabilities is to build an inclusive society in which persons with disabilities are able to lead useful, secure and dignified lives with adequate support for their growth and development. Its mission is to empower persons with disabilities through various Acts, institutions, organisations and schemes, and to create an environment that provides them with

equal opportunities, safeguards their rights, and enables them to participate as independent and productive Members of society.

In the Budget for 2020–21, the allocation under the National Fellowship Scheme for Scheduled Castes has been increased from Rs. 246.66 crore to Rs. 300 crore. Under the National Fellowship Scheme for Other Backward Classes and Economically Backward Classes, the allocation has been enhanced from Rs. 52.50 crore to Rs. 120 crore. Under the National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for Other Backward Classes, the allocation has been increased from Rs. 26 crore to Rs. 35 crore. Assistance to voluntary organisations working for Scheduled Castes has been enhanced from Rs. 70 crore to Rs. 100 crore. Under the Self-Employment Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers, the allocation has been increased from Rs. 99.93 crore to Rs. 110 crore. Under the Integrated Programme for the Rehabilitation of Beggars, the allocation has been enhanced from Rs. 25 crore to Rs. 100 crore. Under the scheme for transgender persons, the allocation has been increased from Rs. 5 crore to Rs. 10 crore. Assistance to voluntary organisations providing social security services has been increased from Rs. 3 crore to Rs. 4 crore. Assistance to voluntary groups working for Other Backward Classes has been enhanced from Rs. 34 crore to Rs. 50 crore. The initiatives undertaken by the Union Government in this regard are highly commendable.

[English]

DR. AMOL RAMSING KOLHE (SHIRUR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I thank you for allowing me to speak on Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. [Translation] Under this Ministry, numerous schemes for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and persons with disabilities have been mentioned, and budgetary provisions have already been made. However, we must reflect on the ground reality of their implementation. The true success of all these efforts will be achieved only when the person standing at the very end of the line becomes the actual beneficiary. Only then will his or her security, self-respect and dignity be preserved. [English] If we look at the budgetary allocation, the post-matric scholarship for SC students has been reduced by almost 50 percent. The total amount of funds spent on the educational empowerment of students from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes has been reduced by almost 39 percent. Here, I would like to quote Mahatma Jyotirao Phuleji, who said:

"Vidye Vina Mati Geli, Mati Vina Niti Geli, Niti Vina Gati Geli, Gati Vina Vitt Gele, Vitta Vina Shudr Khachale. Itake sare anarth eka avighne kele."

Here, he mentioned and emphasized the importance of education. I would like to draw attention to the fact that the State Governments need more funds for post-matric scholarships for SC and ST students. If we talk about Maharashtra, in the year 2017, the anticipated expenditure for the post-matric scholarship, I would like to put it on record, was Rs. 22,411 lakh, out of which the Centre was supposed to give Rs. 16,808 lakh. The proposal was sent by a letter dated 18th April 2017, but the Government of India has released only Rs. 3,623 lakh in May 2017. The remaining grant, which is approximately Rs. 13,200 lakh, is still pending for the sanction of the Government of India. [Translation] Despite this, due to delays on the part of PFMS and the Payment Corporation of India, scholarships for 1,29,511 eligible students pursuing higher education in Scheduled Caste colleges in Maharashtra are still pending. If these scholarships are not disbursed in time and, unfortunately, colleges compel these students to discontinue their studies, who will take responsibility for the destruction of their future? I wish to draw your attention to this serious issue. I also request that the shortcomings and delays on the part of PFMS and PCI be thoroughly examined and that relief be provided to the students at the earliest. At the same time, the Union Government has formulated several schemes for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, including the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation

Scheme, known as DDRS, the ADIP scheme, and the Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, under which rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities are established. There is also the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan. I would like to bring it to your notice, and I would also like to put this on record, that the Government of Maharashtra has forwarded 19 proposals under the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme for the year 2019–20 to the Union Government for approval. A total of eight proposals have been sent for approval under the ADIP scheme, and three proposals have been forwarded under the Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Under the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, proposals for 142 buildings have been submitted. However, it is unfortunate that up to March 2020, not a single proposal has been approved, nor has any fund been released. The Maha Vikas Aghadi Government of Maharashtra is fully committed to and capable of discharging its responsibilities. But if the Union Government does not grant approvals in a time-bound manner, how will the State Government be able to implement these schemes? This is a matter that requires serious consideration. [English] In this Budget allocation, there has been no allocation of funds for schemes and programmes to prevent alcoholism, substance, and drug abuse.

…*(Interruptions)* *Sir, the Government will remain in place; it only needs your suppor.*

Replace them by integrated national programmes. Such programmes can result in the possibility of targeted action. …*(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

DR. AMOL RAMSING KOLHE: I want to speak about two important programmes. Please allow me to speak for two minutes.

In Maharashtra, with the targeted intervention of our Parliamentary Party leader and Member of Parliament, Shrimati Supriya Sule, the Government of Maharashtra is planning to set up a Transgender Board and a helpline for the LGBTQIA community. A similar approach should be adopted by the Centre to help this community.

[Translation]

Sir, I would like to draw the attention of this House to a very important issue. If I am not allowed to speak on this matter, it would mean that the voice of OBCs is being suppressed. In the Census proposed to be conducted in the year 2021, there must be a caste-based enumeration, and a separate column for OBCs should be

* ...Hindi translation of the sentence originally delivered in Marathi

independently incorporated in the Census form. I would like to refer here to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Ji, who, in his work Who Were the Shudras, wrote that an independent enumeration of OBCs has not been carried out. Because of this, the gravity of the issues faced by OBCs has neither been fully understood by the nation nor by society at large.

Sir, under the chairpersonship of the former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan, a Committee comprising 16 Members of Parliament was constituted. That Committee also highlighted this very necessity. ... (*Interruption*s)

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

[Translation]

DR. AMOL RAMSINGH KOLHE: Sir, this is a very important issue. ... (*Interruption*s) Sir, when senior Ministers and the Chief Ministers of all States were present in the National Development Council, ... (*Interruption*s) at that time, the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Narendra Modi Ji, had signed this proposal.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

[Translation]

DR. AMOL RAMSING KOLHE: Sir, even now, protests and demonstrations have begun demanding an independent Census of OBCs in this matter. ... (*Interruption*s) My humble request is that ... (*Interruption*s) there is no separate column for OBCs in it. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude now.

. . . *(Interruptions)*

[English]

DR. AMOL RAMSING KOLHE: I will conclude in one minute.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude within one minute.

. . . *(Interruptions)*

DR. AMOL RAMSING KOLHE: Sir, this is an issue of national interest, because if we speak of social justice but do not even know who the last person standing in the queue is, and how many people are standing in that queue, then how will policies be formulated for them? ... (*Interruption*s) Therefore, I humbly request the Government that an OBC Census must be conducted. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI JASKAUR MEENA (DOUSA): Hon. Chairperson, I extend my sincere thanks to you for giving me the opportunity today to speak on the Demands for Grants relating to the upliftment of that section of society which, even after 72 years of Independence, continues to look on from a distance in its quest for progress and dignity. Therefore, while supporting the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, I wish to place my views before the House. However, if we assess the responsibilities of this Department, its scope is extremely wide. A very large section of the country's population falls within the purview of this Department today. If we look at the Scheduled Castes, their population exceeds 16 Percent. Senior citizens today constitute nearly 9 Percent. If we consider the Other Backward Classes, whom we refer to as OBCs, they too account for close to 41 Percent of the population.

If, along with this, we consider beggars, nomadic communities, persons affected by substance abuse, or transgender persons, and also include those who are economically backward and vulnerable, then I believe that nearly 70 Percent of the country's population is covered. For such a vast and diverse community, the work being carried out today through this Ministry leads me to reflect that whenever the Bharatiya Janata Party has been in Government over

the past 72 years, concern for these sections has always been accorded due importance.

During the tenure of Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji, the two Ministries were separated. Prior to that, there was a combined Ministry. Under that combined Ministry, assessments were carried out, but the work, responsibilities and administrative arrangements relating to the two sections were distinct. The circumstances were also different, which necessitated the separation of the two Ministries at that time. Our Scheduled Castes are largely engaged in manual labour and masonry work. If they reside in villages, they sustain themselves primarily through wage labour under the contract system. If we look at the literacy rate of that period, there has been some increase today. I believe that this increase is also attributable to the fact that the present Government has laid a strong foundation for the upliftment of society, enabling people to lead secure, dignified and honourable lives. Under the leadership of the present Government and the dynamic leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, the manner in which we are moving forward today, I believe, presents a strong example of economic and social development. The core spirit of Babasaheb Ambedkar was, I believe, well understood by all. Everyone has read Babasaheb Ambedkar and, having read him, must have imbibed his ideas as well. But his fundamental sentiment was that…

“Mite visham, samarasataalay ho, bhedabhaav ka dvand vilay ho,

aramaanon ke naye kshitij par dalit varg ka soorya uday ho."

[It symbolises the hope that Dalits move beyond oppression and exclusion to a future marked by equality, empowerment and full participation in the nation’s progress.]

These were his sentiments. However, those sentiments were suppressed, and he himself was also suppressed. As we reflect on the last 72 years since Independence, it becomes evident that for a large part of this period, the country was governed by the same political party. I believe that they did not truly follow the ideals of the real Mahatma Gandhi. Instead, distorted interpretations prevailed, and because of these so-called false Gandhis, the backwardness of these communities remained exactly as it was. I myself come from a Scheduled Tribe community. I know very well what the conditions in villages are like. Even today, in rural areas, these people are still considered untouchable. Even today, they are avoided and discriminated against. However, gradually, along with social upliftment, our dynamic Hon. Prime Minister Ji is working with determination to fulfil the resolve of Babasaheb Ambedkar. The Hon. Minister had guided me like an elder brother during the 13th Lok Sabha. Under his leadership, this Ministry is moving forward. He himself understands the realities on the ground, he

understands the poor in villages. I believe that the manner in which work is being carried out today for SCs and STs is unprecedented. Their Ministry is separate, their pain and suffering are being addressed, and today as many as 323 schemes have been launched for Scheduled Castes. Through these 323 schemes, whether implemented through voluntary organisations, Government channels, or social organisations, significant work is being carried out for their welfare and empowerment. Prior to this, the Congress treated Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minorities merely as a vote bank. By viewing them only as a vote bank, they were deliberately kept backward. They were kept so weak in educational and economic terms that they would continue to vote in a state of dependence, almost like bondage. This is what continued for decades. Today, when the Bharatiya Janata Party has once again come to power and is moving forward with the vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas, there is no doubt that substantial work is being done for these communities, for these backward sections, which together constitute the largest segment of the nation. I would say that a person born on the soil of India, someone who understands villages and the poor, who has lived the life of selling tea or earning a livelihood through hard manual labour, will undoubtedly understand the condition of the poor of this country. Leaders who were born abroad and later became the

heads of the Congress, how could they possibly understand the pain of these backward communities of India? As the saying goes, “One whose feet have never cracked cannot understand another’s pain.” I would say that the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi gradually passed into different hands, hands from which we had little hope. But when those ideals came into the hands of the present ideological leadership, there has been a genuine concern for villages and the poor. Today, we have complete faith that the coming times hold great promise for backward classes, for Dalits, and for Scheduled Tribes. The era of dividing society and practising politics by fragmenting communities on the basis of numbers has now come to an end.

16.00 hrs

I believe that the driving force behind this transformation is our dynamic Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji. I would like to add one more thought here. How do we visualise India? Do we measure India through Delhi? Do we compare India with Mumbai? Do we assess India only through metropolitan cities? No. As the poet Sumitranandan Pant Ji once said—

"Bharat Mata Gramvasini,

kheton mein faila hai shyamal,

dhool bhara maila sa aanchal,

mitti ki pratima udasini."

[These lines underline that the soul of India lives in its villages, and that national development and social justice can only be meaningful when the lives of rural, poor and marginalised people are uplifted with dignity and respect.]

Even today, 75 Percent of the country’s population lives in villages and resides in kutcha houses. Hon. Chairperson, kindly allow me some time. I am the second speaker from the Bharatiya Janata Party, and also the second woman speaker, therefore I should be given time.

I would like to submit that who are the people living in kutcha houses(non-permanent dwelling)? Who are those residing in fragile huts built along railway tracks? Has anyone ever seen or understood their pain? These are the same backward sections, the same tribal communities, the same Dalit communities, who survive solely on daily wage labour. All of us sitting in this House, or those occupying high positions in the bureaucracy, must reflect on this. Who cleans our homes? Has anyone ever thought about it or observed it? These very communities perform those tasks. I would like to say to the Hon. Minister that the time has now come. Today, a budget of Rs. 83,257 crore has been allocated. This allocation of Rs. 83,257 crore will be spent through 223 schemes. If we calculate

the allocation per scheme, it comes to only 19.43 Percent under each scheme, which is a very small amount.

Today, girls belonging to Dalit communities, SCs and STs have started pursuing education. However, the Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships are still very limited. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JASKAUR MEENA: This scholarship will have to be increased. Along with this, I would like to say that the present amount of scholarship is not satisfactory; it is very low. At the same time, provisions relating to the University Grants Commission, rehabilitation of bonded labourers, the National Fellowship for Scheduled Castes, and grants for voluntary organisations also need to be enhanced. While increasing allocations under all these heads, we must also ensure that they are implemented properly and that their benefits reach the grassroots level. This is something we must ensure with seriousness and commitment.

I would also like to submit that through various Ministries, substantial funds are allocated for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, backward classes, OBCs and persons with disabilities, but

the intended benefits are not always realised in full. On several occasions, it has been observed that even the allocated budget is not fully utilised. I was reviewing last year's Budget only recently and noticed that the entire allocation had not been spent. Our foremost condition and our firm resolve should be that whatever amount is allocated must be fully utilised.

Hon. Chairperson, the issue of the creamy layer is also being raised repeatedly, even though many sanctioned posts and backlog vacancies are still lying vacant. Along with this, I would like to state clearly that the discussion on the creamy layer should arise only after we have achieved the prescribed reservation targets. We have not yet achieved those reservation targets. Therefore, raising the issue of the creamy layer at this stage is completely inappropriate and unjustified.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude now. You have got maximum time to speak.

… (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JASKAUR MEENA: I would once again like to urge the Hon. Minister to ensure that the entire budget allocated in this sector is fully and effectively utilised. This responsibility should not

rest only with the Ministry, but you must also ensure accountability at the district level by the concerned officers. Coaching centres should be established in districts for children belonging to backward classes. Children from backward sections cannot afford to spend large sums on private coaching. The Government must take responsibility for them. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: There are a number of speakers from your Party.

… *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JASKAUR MEENA: Hon. Member is absolutely right. We are aware of the ground realities at the village level, tehsil level and district level. Looking at these conditions, we genuinely fear whether the full benefit of the budget allocated by our dynamic Hon. Prime Minister is actually reaching the intended beneficiaries or not. This is something we all understand. Therefore, it must be ensured through the Ministry that coaching centres are established at the district level. Complete arrangements for the education of girls must be made. If a daughter is educated, society as a whole progresses. I say this deliberately because the ‘Beti Bachao, Beti

Padhao ‘movement must be firmly linked with education in practice, not merely in words. Thank you.

[English]

*__SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH (JHALAWAR-BARAN):__ I support the Demand for Grants under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. I was going through the budgetary allocations made in past few years and the actual expenditure undertaken by the Ministry. I found that during the last few years of the UPA Government, the budgetary allocation for Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment did not increase and always fluctuated around Rs. 5000 crore for years. In the year 2011-12, the actual spending of the Ministry was Rs. 5029.26 crore, in the year 2012-13, the actual spending was Rs. 4939.72 crore, this year they did not even cross Rs. 5000 crore. Further in year 2013-14, the actual expenditure increased to Rs. 5515.48 crore. Later after the people provided our NDA Government with a strong mandate, from year 2014, the allocation and actual spending of the Ministry has increased at rapid pace. In the year 2014-15, the actual spending was Rs.5380.89 crore, further in the year 2015-16, actual spending increased to Rs.5752.74 crore and today as per the data available for the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Department has actually spent Rs. 10070.50 crore and this year again the Department has allocated Rs.10103 crore. In the

* Speech was laid on the Table

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, the BE 2020-21 allocation. has increased from Rs. 1009.11 crore of actual spending in 2018-19 to Rs. 1325.39 crore for the BE 2020-21. That is an increase of approximately 30% over the period of 2 years. This is the way our NDA Government functions and prioritise empowerment of backward classes and the persons with disabilities.

Coming to the allocation made to the various commissions. If we look towards the allocation made and the actual spending for the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, we can see that against the actual spending in 2018-19 at Rs. 19.08 crore, the allocation for the BE 2020-21 stands at Rs. 25 crore, which is an increase of more than 25% over the period of 2 years. Even for the National Commission for Backward Classes, the actual spending for the year 2018-19 has been at Rs. 4.50 crore, it has been increased to Rs.8 crore over a period of 2 years. The NDA Government under the leadership of Shri Narendra ModiJi has always put the interests of the backward classes, schedule castes and scheduled tribes at the top of the priority list.

Our NDA Government has always pushed for education and self- development of individuals over giving out subsidies and supporting an individual to become a self-dependent. Our Government has increased the allocation for the National

Fellowship for Other Backward Classes and Economically Backward Classes. In the year 2018-19 the actual expenditure for 'National Fellowship for Other Backward Classes and Economically Backward Classes' was at Rs. 30 crore, and it was increased to Rs. 70 crore in year 2019-20 and today in the BE 2020-21 the amount allocated stands at Rs. 120 crore. This shows the commitment of Modi Government for upliftment and empowerment of Other Backward Classes and Economically Backward Classes.

In India many student wish to study abroad and it is known that the education abroad is very expensive and students from not so affluent families can't afford it. In these scenario, the students from Other Backward Classes and Economically Weaker Section are at a disadvantage when it comes to affordability. Our Government does not want only more affluent students to be able to go abroad and seek admission to foreign university. Our Government is committed to support all the students from the OBC and EWS classes to get education overseas.

Under the head 'National Overseas Scholarship for OBCs', our Government has allocated Rs. 35 crore, which is almost 6 times as compared to the actual expenditure incurred in 2018-19 at Rs. 5.97 crore. This will allow the poor students who cannot afford education overseas to seek scholarship from the Union Government

and fulfil their dreams and quench their thirst for knowledge. Our Government continues to allocate funds for development of human resources which continue to serve the nation and the society in the years to come. This will inspire other students from community of the beneficiaries of such scholarship to study and pursue higher education as well. As we have always said “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas”, our Government has also increased the allocations made to the scheme for Rehabilitation of Beggars. The beggars of our country might not be tax payers, but our Government shall continue to take care of such citizens who have given us the mandate in this house.

Under the scheme ‘Integrated Programme for Rehabilitation of Beggars’, the actual spending for the year 2018-19 was at Rs. 50 lakh which was increased to Rs. 5 crore in BE 2019-20 and to Rs. 25 crores under the revised estimates for 2019-20 and for the year 2020-21 the allocated amount stands at Rs. 100 crore. I am very thankful to the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji for his vision and direction towards rehabilitation of beggars, a category of people who were never attended in past. Furthermore, in our country the transgender community was marginalized for long time and treated badly. They were not provided jobs or any other employment opportunities. It is recently when the Parliament passed the “Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019” and this led

to empowerment of the transgender community and their rights. Even we go through the details of the budget estimates, we can find that under the head ‘Scheme for Transgender Persons’, the actual spending for the scheme for transgender persons was at Rs. 1 crore, ‘which was further increased to Rs. 5 crore in the year 2019-20 and for the current year of 2020-21, the budget allocated is at Rs. 10 crore. I am thankful to our Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji for empowering and uplifting the person standing last in the line with different schemes and increased allocations.

Moreover, as I come from the state of Rajasthan, I would like to draw the attention of this house to the atrocities against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Rajasthan. According to the police data, in 2019, a total of 8,591 cases related to atrocities against SCs/STs were registered in Rajasthan. This is close to 51% increase in atrocities against SCs/STs as compared to 2018, when the total number of cases was 5,702. I request the Hon’ble Minister to take this matter with the Rajasthan State Government at the earliest to protect the rights of the SCs and STs in the state of Rajasthan.

***DR. HEENA VIJAYKUMAR GAVIT (NANDURBAR):** Social Justice and Empowerment are subjects which are very close to my heart. Our Government is committed for the development of the various sections of people as the principle of our governance is inclusive in nature. The vision of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is to build an inclusive society wherein Members of the target group can lead productive, safe and dignified lives with adequate support for their growth and development. It aims to support and empower its target groups through programmes of educational, economic and social development and rehabilitation wherever necessary.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s firm commitment to social justice is very well known. Coming from a poor family and belonging to the lower strata of society he fully understands the problems people face and the desire for opportunity and aspiration. During his tenure, Modi Ji has initiated several good governance initiatives that benefit the underprivileged.

Government has hit the ground running for the welfare of all sections of the society, including farmers, traders, small businesses, unemployed youth and middle class. Hon'ble prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's "tireless" efforts has benefited the country.

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* Speech was laid on the Table

Several public welfare schemes and programmes were launched by the Government in last six years and that the Prime Minister has worked with full dedication without taking a single day leave. The prime Minister is tirelessly working with full dedication and honesty. Schemes for social sector were launched and 15 crore people were linked with banking services which is a big achievement.

A National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) has been prepared for 2018-2025 with an aim to reduce consequences of drug abuse through education, de-addiction and rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families. Under the prohibition of employment as manual scavengers and their rehabilitation Act, the Government has provided one-time cash assistance of Rs. 40,000 each to thousands of persons and imparted skill training to the manual scavengers and their dependents. In addition, following initiatives have also been undertaken by the NSKFDC for the target groups:

> Health Camps.

> Training and awareness Camps.

> Distribution of common safety aids.

> Behavioural skill development training.

Unlike our friends in the Opposition, we believe in delivering results and not lip service.

For seven decades, tribals were not given their rights, their dues and the respect they deserve. Lopsided policies of earlier Governments have caused tribals to lag behind in development. I whole heartedly congratulate Prime Minister Modi Ji and our Finance Minister for allocating Rs 1,38,700 crore for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Other backward Castes (OBCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs). There is a 14% increase in the budget allocation for ministry of social justice and empowerment and a 7.5% increase in that of tribal affairs ministry. The biggest increase has been in scholarship schemes for meritorious students from SCs, STs and OBCs across ministries indicating the Government's emphasis on education for vulnerable sections of society. In the tribal particularly, the biggest increase has been in Eklavya Model Residential Schools programme, where the allocation has increased from Rs 0.31 crore last year to Rs 1313.23 crore. The enhanced allocation is in keeping with Modi Government’s promise of setting up the Premier residential schools in all tribal-dominated districts. Similarly, allocation for pre-matric and post matric scholarship for tribal students have also been increased - both by 17.7%. The allocation, and I am sure they will be properly utlilised under the able leadership of Modi Ji, will bring a positive visible change in

the lives of the SCs, STs and other marginalized sections. The way the Modi Government is working, all regions with tribal population, including the Northeast, will have all- round development and they will complete their journey from 'swaraj' (self-rule) to ‘suraj’ (good governance).

If we can customise tribal development programmes keeping in view their traditional practices, their belief systems and aspirations of the community, we can achieve 100 per cent result in this regard. Another aspect is access to modern healthcare facilities by tribals is still a concern. We need to study their systems, research on them and if we can strengthen their medicine system, tribals will be benefited. Central Sector Scholarship Scheme of Top Class Education for Scheduled Caste Students has been revised in October, 2018 to cover more Institutions with increased number of slots (scholarships), and the revised scheme is applicable from the academic session 2018-19. Now, 220 Institutes including IITs, NITs, IIITs, IIMs, NIFTs, NLUs, AIIMs. Hotel Management Institutes, Aviation Training Institutes and Flying Training Institutes are empanelled under the Scheme, total of 1500 fresh scholarships will be provided under the Scheme. Provision for 30% reservation has also been made for Girl Students. I congratulate Modi Ji for this.

With these words, I again thank Prime Minister and Minister for' Social and Empowerment for this bold and pro-development measures taken by the Government.

[Translation]

DR. S.T. HASAN (MORADABAD): Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

When we speak of social justice and Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, it appears today that these have remained merely textbook phrases. The entire nation is well aware of what the ground reality actually is.

Sir, I would like to submit that the Minority Budget allocated in the year 2019 amounted to Rs. 4,700 crore. However, out of this Minority Budget, only Rs. 1,291 crore had been spent up to November 2019.

16.05 hrs (Shri Rajendra Agrawal *in the Chair*)

Only 27 Percent of the Budget had been utilised by the beginning of November. How much of it was spent in the remaining three to four months is something that you and the Hon. Minister would be aware of.

Sir, I would like to submit that scholarships are indeed being provided, including Pre-Matric Scholarships, Post-Matric Scholarships and Merit-cum-Means Scholarships, but what is the reality on the ground? Last year, a budget of Rs. 1,220 crore was

allocated for Pre-Matric Scholarships, out of which only Rs. 101 crore had been utilised up to 31 October 2019. Similarly, Rs. 496 crore was allocated for Post-Matric Scholarships, but only Rs. 49 crore was spent up to October. This amounts to merely 10 Percent utilisation. In the case of the Merit-cum-Means Scholarship as well, only 17.6 Percent of the allocated amount was utilised.

Sir, I would like to emphasise that it is the responsibility of the Government to identify those officers who allow such budgets to lapse. Strict action should be taken against them to ascertain how such lapses occurred. There is no shortage of students seeking scholarships.

Sir, I would like to place before the House the present Budget situation. The Scheduled Caste population is 16.6 Percent, but the budget allocation for them is only 2.73 Percent. The Scheduled Tribe population is 8.9 Percent, while their budget allocation is merely 1.76 Percent. Minorities constitute 20 Percent of the population, and it is astonishing to note that the budget allocation for them is only 0.16 Percent. OBCs constitute 52 Percent of the population, yet their allocation stands at just 0.07 Percent. On the other hand, others, whose population is only 11.8 Percent, have received as much as 95.28 Percent of the Budget. Is this what social justice means? This data is drawn from the very Budget under discussion. For social justice to be meaningful, at the very least,

budgetary allocations should have been made in proportion to population.

I would like to submit to the Hon. Minister that the path on which we are proceeding places a clear responsibility upon the Government. If loss of life and property occurs during riots, the responsibility for the protection of life and property lies with the Government. There should be a specific allocation in the Budget to ensure that whenever riots occur and there is loss of life or property, the Government compensates the victims. The Government may recover the amount later from other sources, but immediate compensation is essential so that the tears of the affected people may be wiped away.

I would also like to submit that caste-based enumeration is not being conducted. If a caste-based Census is carried out, it will become clear how many people belong to which caste and in what numbers they reside, and accordingly, budgetary allocations should be made. This is extremely necessary at this juncture. As my speaking time is limited, I am unable to place detailed data on caste-based enumeration before the House today, but I would like to emphasise that this is crucial in the national interest.

Sir, the circumstances through which we have passed, the riots that took place in Delhi, and the manner in which destruction

occurred have brought international disrepute to our country. Those police personnel who were found siding with the rioters during the violence must also face strict action. Accountability must be fixed without fear or favour.

Sir, in conclusion, I would like to recite a couplet:

"dekhen to kise dekhen nafarat ki nigahoan se,

aasoon bhi humare hain, daaman bhi hamara hai'

[It underlines the anguish of citizens affected by violence and injustice, suggesting that the nation itself has suffered. The lines appeal for empathy, accountability and healing, rather than hatred, and emphasise that the wounds inflicted by such incidents belong to society as a whole.]

[English]

SHRI HASNAIN MASOODI (ANANTNAG): Sir, we have no reason to downplay the efforts made by the Hon. Minister and the Government to ameliorate the lot of deprived, unattended and downtrodden sections of society. Sir, 14 per cent increase in allocation is also to be appreciate and to be taken note of.

We have to recognise the efforts made by the Hon. Minister which is truly just to his Department. Sir, the effort has to be compared with the enormity of the challenge. The Department of Social Justice touches the lives of, at least, 65 per cent population of the society. So, the Departments were expected to double the efforts and the allocations should have a reasonable connection with the overall expenditure so that the target is achieved.

Because of historical reasons, more than 50 per cent of our population is lagging behind in the race of development. We have not been able to provide a level playing field to the deprived sections of the society. Our efforts are to deal with the challenge facing us. It is shocking that 13 million people continue to be the victims of bonded labour, 30 per cent of the population does not go to bed after a decent meal, the people in old age have nowhere to go with the emergence of nuclear families and the women and vulnerable sections of the society continue to be under-represented

in the Government jobs, educational institutions and the higher educational institutions. In some sectors, though there is 14 per cent increase in the allocations but some of the segments of the disempowered section of the society have been neglected as has been pointed by the learned Members. The same situation is there regarding scholarship earmarked under matric and post-matric level in favour unattended sections of the society.

The two main problems facing the Social Justice & Empowerment Department are lesser allocations and lesser utilisation of funds. Every Hon. Member represents, at least, two million people in this House. We know the ground reality that the benefits of the well-intended schemes do not reach the target groups. It is not that we have not achieved anything at all. The Direct Benefit Transfer to the beneficiaries is a big achievement of this Government but the benefits do not reach the target groups. The Department has to make an efficient mechanism so that the benefits reach the target group that is deprived of the benefits of the well-intended schemes introduced by the Government. We have to make our implementation machinery more efficient and make officials accountable. Let them have a reasonable tenure at the key positions so that at the end of the year, we can ask them as to what are the reasons for under-utilisation of funds.

Secondly, in Jammu and Kashmir, we have, at least, one million people who migrate from Jammu to higher regions of Kashmir with their livestock during summer. The benefits of free gas cylinder do not reach them. Similarly, the benefits of Deen Dayal Upadhyay Yojana do not reach them because they have to shift. We have a number of mobile schools but the teachers are shifted frequently because of which they do not get the benefits. So, I would request the Hon. Minister to come up with some kind of scheme so that the Bakarwals and Gujjars that constitute ST community of Jammu and Kashmir, who migrate from Jammu to higher regions of Kashmir in summer, get access to the benefits. For example, we can have filling stations in the areas that are close to the meadows in Pahalgam, Sonmarg and other areas. We can introduce an aggressive scheme of solar lights for the benefit of these sections so that they equally get the benefits and they are brought within the fold of these schemes. Focus on the old age homes and insular minorities should also be there so that they have the level playing field in getting the benefits that are provided in the schemes.

[Translation]

DR. PRITAM GOPINATHRAO MUNDE (BEED): Hon. Chairperson, thank you. Today, through you, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Ministry, not merely because the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has allocated a budget running into thousands of crores, but because this Ministry is working for the welfare of people born into Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and socio-economically backward classes. Many initiatives that were once unimaginable have been incorporated into its schemes. For this inclusive and forward-looking approach, I would like to congratulate the Ministry.

I would like to place a few points before the House. Under the scheme for prevention of substance abuse, the Government has benefited nearly six lakh people. The Government has implemented several schemes for the empowerment of persons with disabilities. These initiatives are not limited only to persons with physical disabilities; the Government is also working actively in the field of mental health rehabilitation. I say this with a sense of satisfaction because a Member from Maharashtra who spoke before me made certain remarks about what the present Government of Maharashtra intends to do for transgender persons. I would like to remind them that the legislation for the protection of the rights and welfare of

transgender persons, which was enacted in the year 2019, was passed during the tenure of the Modi Government. The initiative has already been taken by us. Thereafter, if any State Government undertakes positive steps, we will certainly appreciate them. However, I do not believe that those who failed to act earlier have the moral authority to lecture us on this issue. I would further submit, through you, that those who speak at length about social welfare schemes should first reflect on the situation where regions like Marathwada are deprived of drinking water. A Government that cuts off water supply would do well to refrain from making tall claims about social welfare. I place this submission before the House through you.

In addition to this, the Modi Government has taken a historic decision by granting constitutional status to the OBC Commission. As a result, the OBC community has many expectations from the Government in the times to come, and I would like to place on record my firm confidence before this House that the Government will certainly fulfil these expectations.

Whenever the issue of social welfare is discussed, we mostly speak about students. If we look at the details of Central scholarships, the allocation of Rs. 415 crore in the year 2019–20 has increased to Rs. 545 crore in the year 2020–21. If we consider

fellowships for Scheduled Castes as a whole, the allocation stands at Rs. 300 crore. However, when we look at fellowships for OBCs, the amount is Rs. 120 crore. The total development allocation for Scheduled Castes is Rs. 6,242 crore, whereas for OBCs, the corresponding allocation is comparatively lower, at around Rs. 1,700 crore.

I would like to place one more point before the House. When it comes to the construction and allocation of hostels, nearly 80 Percent of hostel accommodation is reserved for Scheduled Castes, while the remaining 20 Percent has to accommodate Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and all other socio-economically backward communities. Through you, I would like to place a demand before the Government that a separate plan should be formulated for the construction of hostels exclusively for OBC students. When the Bharatiya Janata Party was in power in Maharashtra, the Government had passed a Government Resolution in the year 2019 for the construction of 36 new hostels of this nature. However, the present Government in Maharashtra appears to be engaged either in cancelling or in putting on hold all the good schemes of the previous Government. In such a situation, I am uncertain about the future of these 36 hostels. If these projects are monitored through the Union

Government, it would provide significant relief in the times to come.

In addition to this, students from the State come to Delhi to appear for and prepare for the UPSC examination. We are Members of Parliament. Whenever a child from our area is about to come here, they ask us where they will stay in Delhi and what arrangements are available for them. If we are able to provide hostel facilities for students belonging to reserved categories, it would be a very significant achievement for them. Through such facilities, they will be able to complete their education, attain a respectable position in life, and carry their entire community forward along with them.

While placing all these points before the House, I wish to draw attention to the most important issue. A senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, a leader respected by all of us, my father Shri Gopinath Munde Ji, consistently raised the demand that an OBC Census must be conducted. His view was clear that unless we know the actual numerical strength of communities in society, how can reservation be determined in a fair and rational manner? The OBC Commission has now been granted constitutional status, which I believe is a positive and welcome step. However, an OBC Census is essential so that decisions regarding the extent of

reservation to be provided to OBCs can be taken in proportion to their population. For this purpose, conducting an OBC Census is of utmost importance.

If one examines the online Census form, it is indeed true that it asks only whether a person belongs to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes or Others. Only these three options have been provided. There is no separate column for OBCs in this form, which is a very serious issue. If the Government takes steps to incorporate such a column, it would prove to be a historic decision in the times to come. Just as granting constitutional status to the OBC Commission was a landmark step, a similar decision regarding the Census would also be historic. I repose great expectations in the Government in this regard. I also place a demand before the Government that the Budget allocation for OBCs should be increased in proportion to their population. I have already placed the relevant figures before the House. If we compare the Budget allocation for Scheduled Castes, the allocation for OBCs is significantly lower, despite the fact that the OBC population is larger. I therefore urge that appropriate provisions be made to enhance the Budget allocation for OBCs. With these demands, a few lines from a poem by Atal Ji come to my mind.

“Chhote mann se koi bada nahin hota aur toote mann se koi khada nahi hota’

[These lines convey the message that true progress and greatness are possible only when society and governance are guided by a broad, inclusive and generous outlook. A narrow or restrictive mindset cannot build a strong nation.]

I would like to say that State Governments should not adopt a narrow outlook; they must broaden their vision. Under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi Ji, the country is doing commendable work and making significant progress. If a narrow mindset is maintained, States will never be able to stand on their own feet. We appreciate the work being carried out on the principles of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas. Let everyone be taken forward together. With this hope and conviction, I extend my support to this Budget.

SHRI SANTOKH SINGH CHAUDHARY (JALANDHAR): Hon. Chairperson Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. When the Hon. Finance Minister presented this Budget, she stated in very cosmetic language that "… this Budget aims to have your aspirations and hopes addressed." However, when the Budget is read and examined closely, the issues that we have been raising since 2014, and the concerns that we highlighted at that time, are once again being raised today.

Over the past six years, the position at which society stood has further deteriorated. In our country, the Scheduled Caste population stands at 16.6 Percent. According to the 2011 Census, Punjab alone has 88.6 lakh people belonging to the Scheduled Castes. While it has been claimed that the Budget reflects an increase and that it is a commendable Budget, the reality is that the increase for Scheduled Castes is only 2.35 Percent and for Scheduled Tribes it is merely 1.45 Percent. Inflation, on the other hand, has risen by 4 Percent. Viewed in this context, the increase is even lower than in previous years. Under the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Castes and the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes, the allocation has been fixed at 9.27 Percent for Scheduled Castes and 5.99 Percent for Scheduled Tribes, whereas it should have been 16.6 Percent and 8.6 Percent respectively. It has also been

repeatedly pointed out that the implementation of the Sub-Plan is not carried out properly. Several Standing Committees, including the Committee on Social Justice and the Committee on Scheduled Tribes, have repeatedly recorded this concern. [English] "The Committee, hence recommends that SCSP should have statutory backing to ensure serious and effective implementation of the plan as has been done by the State Governments of Karnataka and Telangana…" [Translation] This has become a law here. This recommendation has been reiterated by the Committee of the 17th Lok Sabha as well. For the past six years, we have been demanding that this be given legal backing and that a law be enacted to ensure proper implementation of the Sub-Plan.

The second issue relates to allocations under targeted and general schemes. If one examines the Budget closely, it becomes evident that under the guise of Scheduled Caste schemes, a larger portion consists of general schemes. Therefore, I am of the view that this is not a proper or targeted Budget. Many of my colleagues have already pointed out that the education sector faces a very serious challenge. Dr Ambedkar had famously said: educate, agitate and organise. By this, he meant that education is the primary tool through which Scheduled Castes, Dalits and marginalised sections of society can move forward. It was for this very reason that the Government of India introduced the Post-Matric Scholarship

Scheme. This scheme has always been a committed liability of the Government of India, but today it is being systematically diluted. According to the population of my State, nearly three lakh students are beneficiaries of the Post-Matric Scholarship. I state with deep anguish that an amount of Rs. 538 crore from the year 2016–17, Rs. 437 crore from 2017–18 and Rs. 450 crore from 2018–19 remains unpaid towards scholarship funds. In total, an amount of Rs. 1,850 crore payable to Punjab is still pending from the Government of India. The Chief Minister of Punjab, Captain Amarinder Singh, has repeatedly written letters, met the Hon. Minister and met the Hon. Finance Minister. Yet, I now find that this scheme is being completely diluted. Earlier, the Punjab Government contributed Rs. 69 crore and the Government of India contributed nearly Rs. 600 crore. Under the new guidelines, it is stated that the amount will be enhanced in the next year. But what about the previous years, when Post-Matric Scholarships were not released at all? As a result, the number of beneficiaries has already declined. This scheme is being steadily weakened. The Government is withdrawing the very tool that enables the Dalit community to progress and is stepping back from its committed responsibility.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude now.

. . . (*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SANTOKH SINGH CHAUDHARY: What I wish to say is this: if the Government itself dilutes the major schemes meant for Scheduled Castes, how will the community ever move forward?

On the issue of reservation policy, the UPA Government had brought the 117th Constitutional Amendment to address the impact of the Nagaraj judgment. You too examine this matter in committees, but why is this Government not bringing it forward? Is there an intention to place it in the Ninth Schedule so that promotion in reservation remains protected? ... (*Interruption*s) Under the present regime, atrocities and injustices against Dalits have taken place. There must be sincere efforts to put a stop to these. ... (*Interruption*s)

I earnestly request the Hon. Minister to intervene decisively. A policy of dilution is being pursued against the Dalit community. This must be stopped.

***SHRI ASHOK KUMAR RAWAT (MISRIKH):** I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister of our country, Shri Narendra Modi ji, and to the Hon. Finance Minister, Shrimati Nirmala Sitharaman ji, because the Budget presented by the NDA Government appears to be distinct and unconventional. Instead of populist announcements, this Budget has focused on agriculture and farmers, the poor and the middle class, while also giving special attention to the economically weaker sections of society.

Article 38 of our Constitution stipulates that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting, as effectively as it may, a social order in which social, economic and political justice shall inform all the institutions of national life. It further mandates efforts to minimise inequalities in income and to endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities not only among individuals but also among groups of people residing in different areas and engaged in different occupations.

Article 41 and Article 46 of the Constitution further enshrine that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to

* Speech was laid on the Table

work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, disability and other cases of undeserved want. They also mandate that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

I am pleased to state that under the leadership of Hon. Shri Narendra Modi ji, the Government has carried out unprecedented work in all these directions, which is truly commendable and worthy of appreciation.

In fact, the vision of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is to build a society in which the target groups are able to live useful, secure and dignified lives with adequate support for their prosperity and development. Its objective is to provide assistance and empowerment to its target groups through programmes of educational, economic and social development, as well as necessary rehabilitation. In this direction too, the action plans of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment have been unprecedented and highly commendable.

Under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has, over

the past few years, empowered the marginalised and various sections of society, including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, senior citizens, and persons affected by alcoholism and drug abuse, through its diverse programmes relating to educational, economic and social development. These efforts have enabled them to lead active, secure and dignified lives and to fulfil their basic needs. Indeed, the Government has made tireless efforts to ensure equal opportunities for the development of all these sections, which is most welcome.

In conclusion, I strongly support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment as presented by the Hon. Finance Minister in the House. I also humbly request that, keeping in view the all round development of my Parliamentary Constituency, which has a high concentration of Scheduled communities and is an extremely backward region, sympathetic consideration be given to all the above points and adequate funds be allocated in the Central Budget.

[English]

SHRI E.T. MOHAMMED BASHEER (PONNANI): Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. The World Day of Social Justice theme of 2020 was, “Closing The Inequality Gap To Achieve Social Justice”; last year, the theme was, “If You Want Peace And Development, Work For Social Justice”. If we truthfully analyse the Indian ground reality and contemporary situation of what exactly is happening in India against these two themes of this year and last year, I am sorry to say that in this country what is happening is a widening of gap in social justice; or, there is social injustice. This country has become a centre for discrimination on the basis of religion and caste. Kindly excuse me for making such a reference.

India is discussed throughout the world. Renowned social scientists in different countries and institutions like UNHRC have made their observations on the ill fate of our great nation. Hundreds of cases are pending in the Supreme Court of India. The crux of the petitions are social justice and equality before law. These points are going to be debated there. Let us forget all these things and take the authentic report of the Minority Commission of Delhi. I quote from the newspaper: “After visiting north-eastern districts and other places, the Delhi Minority Commission said violence during clashes between anti and pro-Citizenship Amendment Act

protesters in the last week of February was one-sided and well-planned. The Panel observed that the maximum damage was inflicted upon Muslim households and places of business. However, 2,000 outsiders occupied two schools for 24 hours and indulged in rioting, said DMC Chairman Zafar-ul-Islam Khan and Member Kartar Singh Kochar who visited the violence affected areas on Monday and spoke with the people. DMC also said that the Delhi Police should be held accountable for letting the school be used by the rioters. Several eye witnesses claimed that police personnel helped the rioters and even pelted stones." You do not believe me or you do not believe anybody; believe the Minority Commission's report. They have spoken like this. Is it not a shame for this nation? I request you. You defended your case when we discussed this under rule 193. You were in a celebratory mood but I am telling you that you did a major kind of wrong-doing against this country. Even if this Government takes deep bath in the River Ganga, I am telling you, the stain of the sin in your hand and heart cannot be cleaned up. This is what is happening in this country.

The Muslims are the biggest religious minorities in this country. They are facing social inequality and security challenges. When we are living in India, we should be free and fearless but unfortunately what is happening is this. We have to think loudly about this. You are a kind-hearted man. I request you because I belong to the

minority community. Anti-minority legislations are coming up. …*(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You belong to Parliament. You belong to the people.

… *(Interruptions)*

SHRI E.T. MOHAMMED BASHEER: I am coming to the atrocities. I do not want to repeat it. Even the Supreme Court of India has said that we must have a legislation for preventing this kind of a thing but they have not done that.

Glorification of provocative speeches – whoever it may be, this side or that side – I am telling you is very dangerous. The Government should not support this kind of a thing.

Towards the end, I would like to say only one thing. This is not about the minorities but physically-challenged persons. What is happening? There is a Commission for that but the Commissioners are not there at the State-level. That is one thing. The three per cent reservation for differently-abled persons is also not being adhered to. There are many other recommendations but unfortunately there is nobody to check. They cannot speak, they cannot write, and they cannot walk. We have to protect them but unfortunately differently-abled persons are not given justice. I humbly request the Government to do justice for them also.

With these words, I thank you very much for the opportunity.

*__SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA (KORAPUT):__ Normally we have a Tribes Advisory Councils (TACs) which advices State Government on matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes, CM heads the body. Do we have regular meetings, is this happening on ground? As per the Tribal sub plan - the budget should be as per the population of tribals — is this happening? Is there misuse, diversion of funds from tribal sub plan — probably reports suggest on the same on building of flyovers in Bhubaneswar.

Gumudumaha firing is something that brings shame to the Government and should be condemned in all forums. 5 tribals including an infant travelling in an auto rickshaw were killed and seven others were injured in the firing by security forces suspecting them to be Maoists during anti-Maoist Operation at a forest near Gumudumaha in 2016. You reduce funds in Eklabya Residential Schools but increase grants for Private institutions to run Tribal Schools to the tune of 20+ crs per annum?

Also, when you talk about “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas”, is there not a concentrated effort to dilute FRA & PESA? Are not mining mafias sharing stage with the ones in power. You chase Tribals from their homes and make public hearings and PESA just mere

* Speech was laid on the Table

obligations? There should be a balance between growth aspirations and interests/ development of tribals.

The Forest Rights Act has the potential to secure rights and livelihoods of at least 20 crore Adivasis and other traditional forest dwellers over 40 million ha (50% of India's forest land) covering 177,000 villages. As per report of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs till now individual and community rights have been recognized in over 10-13% of minimum area, although the report is replete with illegalities and discrepancies. Recognition of Community Forest Resource rights is merely 3 to 5% of the actual potential. Adivasis and other traditional forest dwellers have faced serious assault on their legal rights since 2014 as the BJP Government has repeatedly set in place enactments and policies to dilute FRA and democratic governance of forests as well as to encourage forest officials to grab the lands of tribals and forest dwellers. At the moment the Government is trying to use two routes – a front door route through proposed amendments to the Indian Forest Act and a backdoor route through the Supreme Court — to condemn crores of tribals and forest dwellers in the country to destitution and extortion, brutality and eviction by forest officials.

On March 7th, the Ministry of Environment and Forests sent a "proposal" for amendments to the Indian Forest Act, 1927, to all State Governments. These amendments give forest officials the

power to take away forest dwellers' rights and to even use firearms with impunity. This is a declaration of war on forest dwellers and against the entire Forest Rights Act. The proposed amendments to the Indian Forest Act and the draft National Forest Policy proposed earlier seek to allow private companies to take over forest land in the name of production forests. If these proposals become law they will be the single biggest attack on this country's tribals and forest dwellers since the first British Forest Act in 1865. Thankfully the Ministry has now withdrawn this for time being.

Weak defense by the BJP Govt has led the Supreme Court passing an order on 13" February 2019 for eviction of over two million Adivasi and forest dwellers' families. The order is a major setback to FRA as it dilutes the spirit of the law by treating tribals and forest dwellers as 'encroachers to be evicted from forests. After nationwide protests the Government was forced to go back to the Supreme Court. But the eviction order has only been put on hold and poses serious threat to the FRA and rights of tribals and forest dwellers. However, in subsequent hearing on 6 August 2019 the Union Government chose not to argue on the main question of evicting people, but instead just pointed out that due process have not always been followed, in response to a question from the court. There is a genuine fear that the Government's silence is a deliberate

attempt to sabotage the Forest Rights Act and thus allow for a mass eviction once again.

Forest clearances have got accelerated with alarming speed in last few years. More than 57,000 hectares were cleared in 2014-2016 alone. Under the law such diversion is only allowed with the consent of the concerned gram sabhas and with a certificate from these gram sabhas that all forest rights have been recognized. But land is being diverted for projects in many states in violation of FRA and even in States where the Forest Rights Act has not been implemented at all, such as Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Even forest rights titles have been cancelled by the previous BJP Government in Chhattisgarh in forests proposed for diversion. The Government has also issued a series of orders intended to make it easier for companies to take over forest land. Orders have been passed to allow forest diversion for mineral prospecting, forest diversion in areas without "tribal populations", grant of mining leases, creation of land banks, etc. without taking the consent of gram sabhas and with illegal exemption of FRA compliance. Most recently the Environment Ministry has issued circular on 26" February 2019 to permit grant of “in principle" clearance without compliance of FRA and gram Sabha consent.

In 2016 the Government passed the CAF Act without even mentioning the words “forest rights." The new Act transfers huge

funds-about 66,000 crores to the forest department and gives complete power to forest officials to plant trees in people's land in violation of FRA and PESA. The CAF Act legalizes the large-scale land and forest rights violations (as CAMPA plantations are routinely set up on community land), environmental destruction (70% of CA is of commercial monoculture plantations), and massive corruption by the forest officials. Moreover, the MoEF on 8 November 2017 proposed to set up land banks in revenue forests for CA plantations, where tribals and forest dwellers have got legal rights, in violation of FRA and PESA.

The Government has also made a constant effort to curtail the access of forest dwellers to forest produce. In 2015 the State Governments of Madhya -Pradesh and Maharashtra passed Village Forest Rules that empowered the Forest Department to bypass the power of forest dwellers to protect and use their community forests, and instead tried to bring community forests under the Forest Department again using these Rules - which give the Department control over non-timber forest produce and the power to take back people's rights at any time. Both the Central and State Governments have failed to record people's rights and ownership over forest produce, haven't remove monopoly control over forest produce by forest department even though this is required under the Forest Rights Act.

As Forest Rights Act faces serious existential threat it is worthwhile to remember that the law was enacted in response to a protracted struggle by tribals and forest dwellers of this country for their legal rights.

The FRA seeks to undo the historical injustice against forest-dwelling Adivasi and other communities by recognizing their pre-existing rights over forest land including rights for cultivation and habitation, ownership rights over minor forest produce and other rights. The law recognizes equal rights of women as well as rights of the most vulnerable communities of pastoralist and nomadic communities, particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs), forest villages and displaced communities. The FRA provides for democratic governance of forests by vesting the rights to manage and conserve community forest resources (CFR) in the Gram Sabha.

Majority of the villages eligible to get forest rights are located in tribal majority and poverty-stricken regions, and face conflicts over land and resources, and are mostly covered under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution and PESA Act. Evidence from the ground shows that right holders have used FRA effectively for ensuring food and livelihoods security, employment generation, forest conservation, gender justice and forest rights of women, and land and resource related conflict resolution. Wherever FRA has

been properly implemented, remarkable achievements are observed in livelihoods and forest conservation in thousands of Gram Sabhas across districts in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and many other places.

FRA is a potential legal instrument which can help meet India's international legal obligations and commitments to climate change mitigation, AICHI targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and obligations under universal human rights instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Recent Supreme Court Judgement on not having reservations as Fundament rights for Promotions Is really unfortunate. We would like the Government to come up with Ordinance/ necessary legislations or file a review petition in Supreme Court, The deafening silence Is very scary.

Finally, would like to ask the Government if they are planning to provide age relaxation to under 10 percent economically weaker sections quota. This is delayed for some time now and need to be urgently looked upon.

SHRI SYED IMTIAZ JALEEL (AURANGABAD): Hon. Chairperson Sir**,** it has been more than seven decades since this country attained independence, but can we, with full responsibility, truly say that we are granting equal rights to our Dalit community? Can we assert with conviction that oppression, injustice and untouchability against them have been completely eradicated? Those sitting on the Treasury Benches may say that yes, but you ...* But if I, sitting in the Opposition, say that they still continue, you will accuse me of indulging in politics. The reality is that in October 2019, the Supreme Court delivered a judgment, and that judgment stated that:-

[English]

"The Supreme Court on Tuesday rolled back an earlier ruling, which made an inquiry mandatory before any arrests were made under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, on the ground that caste discrimination and untouchability still persist in the country. "

[Translation]

* Not recorded

The Supreme Court of this country has observed that caste discrimination and untouchability still exist within this nation. In the same order, the Supreme Court further stated that:

[English]

"The Bench also noted that crimes and atrocities against the d*alits* have shown a disturbing rise in recent years. "

[Translation]

This is an observation of the Supreme Court.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, When the issue of triple talaq was taken up and discussed in this House, you had said that it was a very serious offence and that there was a need to bring a law against it. You did bring a law. But has that social evil actually been eradicated? There is already a very stringent law against atrocities on Dalits. Then why is it that in the year 2020, the Supreme Court is observing that [English] in this country, there has been an alarming increase in atrocities committed against *dalits* and Scheduled Castes? [Translation] You have enacted the law, but is it not the reality that almost every day we continue to read such news from one place or another in this country? I would like to cite an example. [English] 'A Nirbhaya-like case in Gujarat, a Dalit woman was raped and killed.' A shocking Nirbhaya-like case emerged in North Gujarat in January 2020, where a 19-year-old

dalit woman was allegedly kidnapped, gangraped and murdered, and her body was then hung from a tree to make it appear like a suicide. There is another incident from Kotgaon in Uttarakhand. A group of upper-caste men allegedly beat up a 21-year-old dalit resident named Jitendra so badly that he died nine years later. [Translation] Do you know what his so-called offence was? He had attended a wedding and was eating food while sitting on a chair where upper-caste people were seated. For that, he was beaten so mercilessly that he eventually lost his life. They told him, how dare you sit with us and eat? This incident was reported by the BBC. It was covered by newspapers and television channels across the country.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, Today, what we are discussing here is precisely this, how many crores of rupees have been allocated for social justice, and how much money, in the name of justice, has been given to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. My submission is this: even if today you announce an allocation of Rs. 1 lakh crore, and if our mindset and our way of thinking do not change, then in my view, not even Rs. 10 lakh crore will make any difference. If our perspective towards this society does not change, then no amount of money will truly matter. Decisions are taken within the Budget about how much money is being allocated. But

is this not the reality that within Dalit society even today, there is a section that genuinely wants to study, that aspires to move forward, and that seeks dignity and equality, but continues to face barriers not of resources alone, but of prejudice and social exclusion?

Sir, in my household, there is a woman who works as domestic help, whom we address as *mausi*. In Maharashtra, *mausi* refers to one's mother's sister. She has two daughters, one aged 19 and the other 21. Both of them wish to study. Their mother works in my house, yet almost every day her husband brutally assaults those daughters and beats his wife as well. This is the harsh reality of our country today. On the one hand, schemes worth thousands of crores of rupees are announced in the name of Dalits, and on the other hand, in almost every Dalit settlement, a liquor shop is opened. Through you, Hon. Chairperson, I would urge the Government that if it truly believes in Babasaheb Ambedkar, because of whom we are able to hold this discussion in this House, then it must also remember that Babasaheb clearly advised society to stay away from alcohol and intoxication. If decisions are to be taken in the true sense, then the Government must decide that no country liquor shop should be permitted in any Dalit neighbourhood.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, It was just mentioned here about Muslims. In this very House, the President of my party, Shri Owaisi

Sahab, had stated that Muslims should not be given Haj subsidy. We also support this view that no subsidy should be given. Haj is a religious obligation, and there is no need for public money to be spent on it. We had requested the Government that instead of spending Rs. 700 crore every year in the name of Haj subsidy, those funds should be used to open schools for Muslim girls. You listened to us to the extent that suited you. You discontinued the Haj subsidy, but not a single school has been opened for Muslims.

Secondly, I would like to say that if we truly want to do something meaningful for the welfare of the Dalit community today, then there is a pressing need to promote them through education. There is a need to provide demand driven scholarships. It should not be the case that a fixed amount is earmarked and only those students who somehow fit within that limit receive support. That approach is insufficient. Every child who genuinely wants to study must be provided a demand driven scholarship. This is not a simple matter. It is not like a virus where a Minister can stand on the road and say, “Go Corona go, Corona go, go Corona go,” and the problem will disappear. The entire world today is grappling with this challenge. Similarly, if justice is to be delivered to Dalits in its true sense, it will require a deeply sincere and honest effort. We

hope and expect that the Government will undertake such an honest effort. Thank you.

SHRI VINOD KUMAR SONKAR (KAUSHAMBI): Thank you, Chairperson. I express my gratitude to you for granting me permission to speak on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

I extend my thanks to the Hon. Minister and convey my appreciation that, under his leadership, this Ministry is certainly setting new benchmarks every day and, by launching new schemes on a continuous basis, is consistently working for the welfare of the Scheduled communities, the OBC community, and persons with disabilities across the country. At the same time, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Minister that, under your leadership, your Ministry has recently achieved the distinction of being recorded in the Guinness Book of Records at Prayagraj. Under your guidance, not just one but as many as ten initiatives and ten camps have found a place in the Guinness Book of Records. This clearly reflects your commitment to work and demonstrates the dedication of the Government and your Ministry towards these sections of society.

Further, I would also like to congratulate the Government for increasing the allocation by nearly Rs. 9,000 crore compared to the previous financial year. However, one issue that repeatedly comes to the fore is that the budget is not utilised in its entirety. Therefore, through you, Chairperson, I urge the Government to take note of the fact that even today there are many individuals in society who

continue to harbour discriminatory mindsets, due to which the full utilisation of the budget does not take place and the allocated funds are returned unspent.

Along with this, I would also like to point out that under your leadership, whereas the previous government had allocated only Rs. 425 crore for persons with disabilities, we have spent Rs. 1,067 crore. With all these aspects in view, I wish to raise one most important point. A short while ago, an Hon. Member from Shri Owaisi's party made a point which he described as being in the interest of the Scheduled communities. He stated that the Haj subsidy should be abolished. I would like to ask him one question, and I also wish to place this matter before the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Aligarh Muslim University, time and again, has been violating the reservation policy in this country. Whether it is a person belonging to the Scheduled communities, the OBC communities, or even the economically poor and landless among the general category under the leadership of our Hon. Prime Minister, reservations are not being implemented there. My question is this: has Shri Owaisi ever stood up in this House to raise a demand on this issue?

I would like to ask those people who stood in protest against the CAA holding up photographs of Babasaheb and claiming that reservation was under threat, that the Constitution was under threat, and that the Constitution was being insulted: where exactly is the Constitution in danger, and where is it being disrespected, when citizenship is being granted to people who have come from Pakistan and who are poor, Dalits, exploited and persecuted?

Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House to Aligarh Muslim University. All Central universities in this country function on the basis of Central grants and under the framework of our Constitution. However, in Aligarh Muslim University, reservation has not been implemented from 1981 till date, and there has been a continuous violation of reservation provisions. Those who speak of unity between minorities and the Scheduled communities, I want to ask them whether they will raise their voice for reservation for the Scheduled Castes, the OBC communities, and also for the economically weaker sections among the general category, who have been granted reservation under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, in Aligarh Muslim University. Aligarh Muslim University was established in 1920, and Banaras Hindu University, which was established in 1916, was created under a similar Act. Both these universities were established through Acts of

Parliament. At the time of Independence, in 1950, both BHU and Aligarh Muslim University were declared universities of national importance. Yet, there has been a persistent and motivated attempt by the Congress to project Aligarh Muslim University as a minority institution. Be it our former Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad or, subsequently, Education Minister M. C. Chagla in 1965, all of them have stated in Parliament, not once but repeatedly, that Aligarh Muslim University is a university of national importance and not a minority institution. On this issue, Aligarh Muslim University passed a provision granting 50 Percent reservation in medical admissions, which was challenged before the Allahabad High Court. The Allahabad High Court declared this provision to be completely unconstitutional. Thereafter, the matter also came up before the Supreme Court. Two Hon. Judges of the Supreme Court, speaking with one voice, categorically held that Aligarh Muslim University is not a minority university but a university of national importance, and therefore reservation must be provided to all sections of the country, whether they belong to the Scheduled Castes, the OBC communities, or the general category. Through you, I would like to congratulate the Government that this matter is presently under consideration before the Supreme Court, and that the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji, has filed an affidavit before the Supreme Court clearly stating that Aligarh

Muslim University is not a minority institution. I wish to state through this House that until reservation is implemented in Aligarh Muslim University, its grants should be completely withheld. This is a very serious matter. I would like to emphasise that whether it is the Allahabad High Court or the Supreme Court, they have stated not once but repeatedly that the Scheduled communities of the country, the OBC communities, and the deprived sections of the general category are looking towards the Hon. Prime Minister with great hope. Just as the Ayodhya issue was resolved after five and a half centuries, I humbly submit that this issue, which concerns the interests of the Scheduled communities, must also be resolved. Had reservation been implemented in Aligarh Muslim University over the last fifty years, countless doctors, engineers, teachers and other staff Members from the deprived sections of society would have benefitted.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, I would like to submit a request to the Hon. Minister. The Hon. Prime Minister has stated that the Scheduled communities of this country should not remain job seekers but should become job creators. To achieve this objective, the Government of India provides funds to the State Finance and Development Corporations through the Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation Limited. However, during the

previous regimes of the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh, the entire funds of the Uttar Pradesh Finance and Development Corporation were misappropriated by the drivers of leaders belonging to the SP and BSP. That money has not been returned to date.

As a result, the Uttar Pradesh Finance and Development Corporation Limited has been completely shut down. I request the Government that this is merely a matter of Rs. 200 crore. If this amount is waived, the Uttar Pradesh Finance and Development Corporation Limited will be able to stand on its own feet once again and will be in a position to provide loans to the Scheduled communities of this country, thereby enabling them to become self-reliant.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, I am the National President of the Scheduled community. If I do not raise their concerns, who will? ... (*Interruption*s) All right, I am mindful of the time constraints. I would like to submit that scholarships should also be enhanced in accordance with inflation, because due to the non-revision of scholarship amounts, many children are unable to continue their education.

I repeatedly emphasise this point: on 26 November 1949, when Babasaheb handed over the first copy of the Constitution of this

country to the President of India, he stated that from 26 January 1950 the Constitution would come into force, bringing political equality, but that economic and social equality would still remain to be achieved. He clearly said that the attainment of economic and social equality would depend on the governments that would come in the future. I would like to congratulate the Hon. Prime Minister and state that, under his leadership, the process of achieving social and economic equality has certainly begun. With these words, I conclude my remarks. Thank you.

[English]

[*] **SHRI RAHUL KASWAN (CHURU):** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is responsible for the welfare and empowerment of certain disadvantaged sections of society such as (i) Scheduled Castes (SC), (ii) Other Backward Classes (OBC), (iii) persons with disabilities, (iv) senior citizens, (v) victims of substance abuse, and (vi) transgender persons. India's budget for FY 2020-21 is estimated at Rs. 30.42 lakh crore, which is apparently 12.7% higher than the revised estimate of 2019-20. The key focus of the budget is set upon rural development, health care, education, and skill development. While formulating the budget, it is important to maintain a balanced and progressive approach to strengthen and enrich the foundation of the nation. That being so, the Government has allocated a fair share of funds to MSJE for the betterment of its targeted population. However, there are certain sections where more funds could be granted to accomplish the objectives of the department. The Ministry is composed of two Departments: the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.

The budgetary allocation for the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry in the financial year 2020-21 increased to

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[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

Rs. 10,103.57 crores from Rs. 8,885 crores (revised estimates) in FY 2019-20, marking a remarkable 13.7% increase in this particular department, considering the 11% decrease in the previous financial year. The renewed emphasis on educational empowerment by the Centre with respect to scholarships and fellowships for SC and OBC students aims to build a caring society by attending to the weak and vulnerable sections. The heavy allocation made towards the National Action Plan for Senior Citizens and the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction ensures empowerment for the disadvantaged sections of society.

The DNTs are a heterogeneous group that faces various challenges, especially regarding access to caste certificates, health care, and school enrollment. Despite the Government's efforts in accumulating citizens' data, this marginalized group has not been effectively reached out to. The scheme for the development of DNTs has been stagnant over the years, except in FY 2020-21, when the allocation for the Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Communities increased from Rs. 0.4 crore to Rs. 1.24 crore. The amount of budget allocated to a special category does not ensure their upliftment unless the benefits planned reach them at the ground level. The Government should plan awareness drives in every remote area and grant them identity certificates to qualify and quantify their future needs.

The fund allocation for the Pre-Matric Scholarship for Children of those engaged in unclean occupations and prone to health hazards saw a decline of 16.6%, from Rs. 30 crores (RE in FY 2019-20) to Rs. 25 crores in the current FY. Such children form an important section of the community who should not be overlooked, considering their vulnerability and the existence of social stigma. The above scheme targets manual scavengers, waste pickers, tanners, and flayers, but it is not expanding its reach to other occupations that are equally menial, degrading, and hazardous, such as sewage and septic tank workers, who are in dire need of state assistance.

According to the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment in its 50th report to the Demand for Grants 2019-20 of DSJE, the crucial scheme is not implemented well since the majority of states have not identified the eligible children under the scheme, thereby denying them the educational empowerment to which they are entitled.

Despite the specific allocation of funds by the Centre towards the most marginalized sections of society, the states' contributions to this scheme are under-utilized. Most states have even failed to identify their principal targets, i.e., manual scavengers, and there is no data available to show that any benefits have reached the concerned community. Regardless of the unprecedented deaths and

accidents of sewer and septic tank workers, no educational assistance is provided to the children of such workers, which is discriminatory. Therefore, the Centre should ensure that the funds allocated for these children are efficiently utilized by the states. More awareness drives should be conducted to identify the important sections targeted under this scheme. Proper reports and data should be maintained by trained supervisors to ensure that the allocated funds effectively benefit the children of those engaged in unclean occupations. The scheme should be modified to include all workers in hazardous occupations after due investigation and research.

The budgetary allocation for the Strengthening of Machinery for Enforcement of the Protection of Civil Rights Act 1995 and the Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 saw a 12.6% reduction from Rs. 630 crores (RE in FY 2019-20) to Rs. 550 crores in the current FY. The PCR Act imposes a statutory duty on State Governments to set up special courts, district-level committees, appoint officers, and identify areas where people are suffering from the vice of untouchability. Similarly, the SCs & STs (POA) Act imposes exemplary punishments to ensure the prevention of atrocities and seeks to provide legally justiciable rights to the victims. However, the indignities, harassment, and humiliations faced by such sections are rising with each passing day, and the provisions of these Acts

are sometimes inadequate to check and deter the crimes to which they are subjected.

I would like to suggest that more funds should be allocated to this scheme because, in the wake of increasing attacks and atrocities against SCs and STs, it is necessary to provide proper relief and rehabilitation for the victims. Due to the heavy number of pending cases, more exclusive special courts (which do not exist in the majority of states) should be set up for speedy trials. For strengthening the enforcement of these Acts, regular monitoring by skilled officers with the right aptitude and better understanding of the matter should be encouraged. The Centre should lend its support to assist the states in achieving the required objectives. Legal aid should be provided to the victims of atrocities through NALSA by conducting outreach programs and setting up legal aid camps.

The budgetary allocation for the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities also saw an increase of around 20%, rising to Rs. 1,325.39 crore from Rs. 1,100 crore in the previous year. The funds granted for the National Program for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities are appropriate, assisting disabled persons through the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (Rs. 130 crores), the Indian Spinal Injury Centre (Rs. 4 crores), purchase/fitting of aids and appliances (Rs. 230 crores), and the

National Trust (Rs. 39.50 crores), along with welfare schemes like scholarships for students with disabilities (Rs. 125 crores).

The total budget allocated for the expenditure of autonomous bodies is estimated at Rs. 465.52 crores, which is more than the previous FY 2019-20 at Rs. 282.55 crores. More emphasis is given to National Institutes and the Centre for Disability Sports (Rs. 100 crores), while the fund for the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre has been completely phased out. There has been only a marginal increase in the allocation to the Rehabilitation Council of India, considering its responsibility for qualified professionals working towards the rehabilitation of disabled people. The National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation, which is a key body to be encouraged, does not find any funds in the budget. Given the alarming increase in the number of suicides and mental health issues, a substantial increase in allocation for mental health programs and institutes is required.

Since mental health and rehabilitation are essential areas for the empowerment of disabled persons, it is pertinent for the Government to allocate more funds: (a) for mental health programs, counseling and rehabilitation institutes; (b) for the rehabilitation of disabled persons with rare diseases; (c) for enhancement of sign language interpreter services; (d) for raising qualified professionals to guide and counsel persons with disabilities in order to rehabilitate

them; (e) for introducing and ensuring that all persons with disabilities access entitlements to cover disability-related extra costs.

Considering that the overall scheme for the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act was altogether done away with in the BE of 2020-21, the Demand for Grants for the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities should be substantially increased. There is a need for the Government to allocate funds: (a) for the research of technology products for the easeful living of disabled persons; (b) for ensuring accessible environments for transport and communication facilities, including lifts, escalators, and accessible toilets in railway stations; (c) for the increment in the disability pension, which has remained at Rs. 300 for many years; (d) for setting up training and sensitization campaigns in rural areas where a vast majority of disabled persons reside. The 'Accessible India' campaign should be extended even to rural areas and not only limited to urban cities; (e) for setting up a committee or organization to ensure accountability and monitoring of the financial commitments. As programs get subsumed under the large schemes of the Government, the data becomes invisible.

The Budget 2020-21 has given a decisive push to the social sector with enhanced allocations for welfare schemes. The Government has put a renewed thrust on fighting drug abuse, care

of senior citizens, and rehabilitation of beggars. According to the Union Finance Minister, the Union Budget for FY 2020-21 is inspired by three key themes: aspirational India boosted with economic development, to achieve a caring society. Therefore, to accomplish this goal, it is essential to offer equal opportunities to all sections of society, especially the disadvantaged ones.

[Translation]

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL (NAGAUR): Hon. Chairperson, first of all, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2020–21.

Even after 70 years of Independence, when we see the kinds of incidents reported today through newspapers, social media and television, we are compelled to feel that at different points in history this country has seen British rule, feudal rule, the rule of monarchs in many regions, recurring famines, and thereafter political leaders who, in several places, misled the people. The suffering that ordinary citizens continue to endure, whether through incidents occurring in my home State of Rajasthan or elsewhere in the country, clearly shows that the person standing at the very end of the line has still not received true social justice and empowerment. Even today, that person does not feel fully secure. I would like to thank the Hon. Prime Minister because every section of society, whether belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes or the OBC community, now looks towards Delhi with greater hope. This is because, as we can all see, most State Governments have failed in delivering to the people. As a result, citizens increasingly expect that the Hon. Prime Minister will do something for them. Under his

leadership, houses have been provided to people, and efforts are being made to ensure water and electricity for those standing at the last mile. Therefore, it is undeniable that over the last six years, the Hon. Prime Minister has played a very significant role in advancing the long and difficult struggle for social justice. The schemes introduced for the welfare of Harijans, as well as the laws passed to protect the rights of transgender persons, have all been enacted under this NDA Government.

When the Constitution was being framed, Babasaheb played an immensely significant role in its making. During the drafting of the Constitution, there was also a proposal that illiterate people should not be given the right to vote. At that crucial juncture, Babasaheb, along with leaders representing the farming community, firmly argued that the right to vote must be granted to every individual. Had they not fought that battle for universal adult franchise at that time, I do not believe that leaders would have ever gone into the villages and rural areas. If only the educated had been allowed to vote, how would the illiterate citizen ever have found a place in democracy? For the past 70 years, the Constitution that Babasaheb so strongly and thoughtfully framed has stood firm, yet in many places its true spirit is still not being implemented. Today, the entire nation is looking towards the Government in Delhi with hope that

it will work to uplift the exploited and the oppressed sections of society. We all collectively pledged to ensure social, economic and political justice. Along with this, the Constitution also issued clear directions to the States that social justice must protect Dalit communities and the SC and ST communities from all forms of exploitation. Now that we have celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Indian Constitution, it is only natural and necessary to ask how much social justice we have truly been able to deliver in independent India, to whom it has reached, and to what extent it has been realised.

Hon Chairperson Sir, in my Nagaur district, Arjun Ram Meghwal ji is present here; he too had gone there. All three of our MLAs sat on a dharna at the site. In Karanu village, a Dalit youth was subjected to a brutal atrocity where petrol was poured into his private parts, and the video of this incident went viral across the entire country. Despite this, the Government did not remove the SP posted there. On the other hand, when an incident occurred in neighbouring Barmer district, the SP and the IG were removed without even waiting for a proper investigation. The officers in Nagaur were not removed because leaders like myself and Arjun Ram Meghwal ji had gone there, and the Government felt that removing the SP would send a strong message. Under the pretext

of avoiding that message, the affected family was deeply demoralised. I will conclude my remarks within a minute. Hon. Minister ji had personally visited the family in connection with that incident. I thank you for going there, travelling nearly a thousand kilometres from here, and for reassuring the family that the Government is standing with them and is fighting this battle. … (*Interruption*s) I request that the SP be removed from there. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: The Minister wishes to say something.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL): You have raised a very valid issue. The House must also condemn the Karanu incident. It was an extremely inhuman act. Our State President, Satish Poonia ji, constituted a committee. I too visited the site, the Commission visited, and the Human Rights Commission also went there. You were present, and your brother, who is an MLA, was also there. This is a fight for social justice that must be fought. The incident that occurred in Nagaur has brought shame to Rajasthan. Therefore, we are fighting this battle. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIHAL CHAND (GANGANAGAR): State Government should be issued direction... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL: Directions have been issued to the State Government, and you are saying that justice will be ensured. The Hon. Minister is also present here.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: This struggle is, in fact, a struggle of the nation. Political parties must rise above their differences and unite to address and eliminate such issues.

Hanuman ji, you may speak now.

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: In Barmer, an atrocity was committed against a Dalit. A Dalit died after being beaten in a police station. Around the same time, a Dalit youth also died in Jalore. Rajasthan has now become the State in the country where the highest number of atrocities against Dalits are taking place. It was because of Dalits that the Congress Government was formed in Rajasthan, and yet it is they who are facing atrocities. The maximum atrocities are being committed against them because of this [*]... *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: This should be expunged from the proceedings.

[·] Not recorded

. . . (*(Interruptions)*

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: Sir, ...*.. *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: No, you should not say such things.

... (Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: A ruling has already been given on this. Hanuman ji, please continue with your remarks.

. . . (*(Interruptions)*

HRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: Please call more Members; only three or four people are present here. … (*Interruption*s) You are not listening to us. We sit here till midnight.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, even seventy years after the Constitution came into force, social justice remains far beyond the reach of the marginalised sections. All these incidents clearly show that Governments have failed miserably in protecting the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, the proportion of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes in India's population is 16.6 Percent, 8.6 Percent and 41 Percent respectively. It will shock you to know that despite such a large share in the population and despite constitutionally mandated reservation, in

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* Not recorded

Central Universities only 5.9 Percent of Professors belong to the Scheduled Castes, 0.73 Percent to the Scheduled Tribes and merely 0.33 Percent to the OBCs. This is an extremely serious matter. Even at the levels of Assistant Professors and Associate Professors, the representation of these communities is deeply disappointing. Through you, my demand is that directions be issued immediately to fill these vacant posts. The Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs must be given their constitutional rights without any further delay.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, in our State of Rajasthan, there are vacancies for judges in the High Court, yet the number of judges from the OBC, SC and ST communities is negligible, almost non-existent. I urge that appointments from these communities be made at the earliest.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, despite being an agriculture-based country, farming has never remained an attractive profession for farmers. At times there is excessive rainfall, at times hailstorms, landholdings have become smaller due to fragmentation and division, yet today farmers cultivate crops out of sheer compulsion to ensure food production. They face numerous hardships and accidents, but despite all this, they continue to provide food for the nation.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, it is the consequence of this very crisis that, over the past five years, farming communities have been compelled to take to the streets demanding reservation in Government jobs. Whether it was the Jat agitation in Haryana in 2016, in which as many as 30 young people lost their lives within just three days, the Patel reservation movement in Gujarat, the Maratha reservation agitation in Maharashtra, the Kapu reservation movement in Andhra Pradesh, or the large-scale agitation by the Gurjar community in Rajasthan. The Gurjar community was fighting for reservation, and 72 Gurjars laid down their lives in that struggle.

17.00 hrs

Today every farming community is seeking reservation in Government jobs. Therefore, my submission is that since the Hon. Prime Minister has a large and compassionate heart, the Government must also reflect on how the children of those communities, who make sacrifices on the borders for the defence of the nation, can move forward in life. State Governments have largely stopped thinking in this direction. The Union Government has given a very significant gift by providing ten Percent reservation on an economic basis, and this has received widespread support across the country. However, a matter of serious concern is that this law excludes every farmer who owns more than five acres of agricultural land from the ambit of reservation. A rider has been inserted to this effect. This rider must be removed. As a result, economically backward farmers are being penalised merely because they are farmers, by denying them reservation, which goes against the very principles of economic justice. In Haryana as well, this benefit is not being extended. In this regard, I earnestly request the Government to include farmers owning more than five acres of agricultural land within the ambit of EWS reservation.

Today, I would like to raise the issue of the nomadic communities of the country and of Rajasthan in particular, such as the Gadia Lohar, Banjara and similar groups, who are compelled to live without shelter on vacant lands and pavements, whether in the scorching heat of Rajasthan or in the bitter cold. Despite the recommendations of the Renke Commission submitted in 2008, the Government has so far failed to provide these communities with permanent housing and the same rights and facilities that are available to other citizens. However, these communities are now looking towards the Hon. Prime Minister with hope. I humbly request the Government to make proper arrangements for the rehabilitation of these communities and to implement the recommendations of the Renke Commission of 2008 with immediate effect. The nomadic and semi-nomadic communities should be classified at the earliest under the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes or Other Backward Classes, so that they may receive their due constitutional rights and social justice.

Over the past few years, substance abuse has seen an alarming rise and has emerged as a global challenge. Narcotic substances can entrap individuals of any age group, but the likelihood is particularly higher among youth, adolescents and young adults. In such a situation, in order to safeguard the social fabric, it is absolutely essential not only to free drug-affected youth from

addiction but also to integrate them into society by making them employable. Through you, I humbly submit that India must become a drug-free nation and every State must become drug-free. To achieve this, I urge that a de-addiction and rehabilitation centre be established at every district and sub-division level. Further, those admitted to these centres should be provided with suitable vocational training so that they can be reconnected with the mainstream of society and lead dignified, productive lives.

Finally, I would like to make one more submission. The convicts in the Nirbhaya case have been awarded the death penalty. I thank the Government of Shri Narendra Modi for bringing a law that provides for capital punishment in cases of rape committed against girls and women. The eyes of the entire nation have long been fixed on the Nirbhaya case. Just yesterday, I was watching television and saw that in the United States, in an earlier case, a 70-year-old man was sentenced to 23 years' imprisonment.

My humble request is that if there are any minor legal technicalities or procedural hurdles remaining in the execution of the sentence awarded to the Nirbhaya convicts, they should be removed and the punishment should be carried out without further delay. The greatest authority rests with this Parliament. Parliament is supreme, even above the Supreme Court and the High Courts. Parliament makes the laws, and even the salaries of the Judges of

the Supreme Court and the High Courts are paid after the Budget is passed by Parliament.

Through this House, I would also like to urge that a special session of one or two days be held exclusively to discuss issues and problems related to women. Although discussions are held on various subjects under Rule 193. I would like to thank the ‘Pari’ organisation for raising its voice to protect the dignity of women and for taking a stand against the injustices and atrocities inflicted upon them. Therefore, my demand is that Parliament must devote at least one or two full days to a serious and dedicated discussion on crimes, injustice and violence against women.

Thank you very much.

[English]

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Thank you very much, Hon. Chairperson, Sir.

Sir, I rise to speak on the Demand Nos. 92 and 93. I have already moved the Cut Motions at Serial No. 1 and at Serial Nos. 3 to 11. One of the main Cut Motions is regarding the disapproval of the policy, that is:

> "Failure in formulating an effective policy for prevention of desertion of senior citizens by their children and relatives."

This is the Cut Motion regarding disapproval of the policy which I have already moved.

The other Cut Motion which I have already moved, and which I would like to place on record is:

> "Need to chalk out a separate scheme for providing special assistance for the skill development of Other Backward Classes, de-notified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes/Extremely Backward Classes."

The next cut motion which I have moved is:

> "Need to provide infrastructure facilities for old age homes."

Then, another very important point which I would like to highlight is regarding disabled persons and for that also I have moved a cut motion. It says:

> "Need to launch special programmes for disabled persons so as to make them self-reliant."

I have already moved all these cut motions and they may be taken into consideration. That is my first suggestion.

Sir, coming to the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, if you examine Demand Nos. 92 and 93, the Budget has given a marginal increase of 14 per cent in respect of social justice and empowerment and 7.5 per cent increase for tribal affairs. The biggest increase is in the sector of Scholarship Schemes for Meritorious Students of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Here, the allocation is a little bit comfortable. Last year, there was a decline of 11 per cent in the allocation of funds as it was Rs. 8,885 crore; now it has been enhanced to Rs. 10,103.57 crore, and so, it is a little bit comfortable. I do appreciate it.

What is the main motto of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment? I would like to submit that it is to build an inclusive society. That is the sole purpose of having this Ministry. We have to have an inclusive society wherein the Members of the

target groups are provided adequate support for their growth and development. As far as the existing target groups are concerned, if you see the Scheduled Castes, their population is 20.14 crore. It means that 16.6 per cent of the total population of India belongs to the Scheduled Castes and 41.7 per cent belongs to Other Backward Classes. That means, 58.3 per cent of the total population comes under the targeted groups for whom we are giving Rs. 10,103 crore. This is the allocation which we are providing from the Union Budget. We have to keep that in mind.

There is a mandatory obligation on the part of the Government as per the Directive Principles of State Policy, and especially Article 46 of the Constitution is meant to protect the interest of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of the society. So, it is a mandatory obligation on the part of the Government to see that these marginalised sections of the society, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have to be protected and for that purpose, reservation and allocation of money for scholarships are provided.

Coming to the challenges which are being faced by the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes are concerned, the first point I would like to make is regarding Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG). Who are the persons who are directly affected by LPG? According to me, the Scheduled Castes and

Scheduled Tribes are the worst affected people because of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. You are providing reservation to them in education as well as in employment. But if you examine from 1990 onwards, during the last 30 years of experience of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation, what is happening in our country? There is no reservation. The right to get reservation in education and employment is being taken away indirectly by means of rampant and indiscriminate privatisation. That is why, I am saying that disinvestment and privatisation are adversely affecting the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who are entitled for reservation.

Then, atrocities against Dalits and marginalised sections of the society are happening frequently. I am not going into those details. Many such incidents are happening in our country. Even in my State, in one such incident that happened at Walayar, two girls have committed suicide because of sexual abuse. But unfortunately, no action has been taken so far.

Sir, I would like to highlight one more point which has not been discussed in this House and that is regarding reservation to the economically weaker sections of the society. I do appreciate that it was a historic legislation which was passed by the Parliament during the 16th Lok Sabha; the Hon. Minister has piloted the Bill and it has been passed to provide reservation in education and

employment to economically weaker sections of the society. The guidelines have been issued by the Government of India. But if you examine these guidelines, you would find that 99 per cent of the eligible deserving candidates from the State of Kerala would not get reservation in education and employment. I will substantiate it. It is a very important point, which I am making.

The guidelines regarding the family income, area of land and residential plot are not according to the States. So, I would urge upon the Government to review and revise these guidelines. It is because if any person or a family owns a property of any of the prescribed assets, he is not eligible for the reservation. Having 'five acres of agricultural land and above', he is not eligible for reservation. We agree. As far as Kerala is concerned, nobody is having five acres of land. Having a 'residential flat of 1,000 square feet and above', he is not eligible. Similarly, having a 'residential plot of 100 square yards and above in municipality', he is not entitled. Then, having a 'residential plot of 200 square yards and above other than the notified municipality', he is not eligible. In Kerala, with 2-3 sons, having a residential plot, he is not entitled to have reservation according to the Economically Weaker Sections norms. So, please review and revise the guidelines issued by the Government of India.

There is one last point, and then I would conclude. We are having the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; we are having the National Commission for Backward Classes; and we are having the National Commission for the minorities. So, I would urge upon the Government to also have the National Commission for Economically Weaker Sections of the Society belonging to general classes.

With these words, I conclude. Thank you very much.

SHRI NAMA NAGESWARA RAO (KHAMMAM): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity to discuss the Demands for Grants under the control of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

[Translation]

Hon. Chairperson Sir, the allocations made in this Budget, which we are discussing in this House, should have been increased substantially. The allocation provided is far too modest. Even if we look at it in comparison with last year, it reflects an increase of about 14 Percent, but the people for whom these allocations are meant are among the poorest sections of our society. Even after so many decades of Independence, their living conditions have not improved in a meaningful way. The allocation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs must be enhanced further. From the total revenue being generated across the country, a fixed Percent should be earmarked and allocated accordingly for these sections. Along with this, serious consideration must also be given to the issues and welfare of nomadic tribes.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, with regard to the issues we have taken up in Telangana for the empowerment of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, I would like, through you, to place these before the House and the nation. Among these issues, whichever the Union

Government considers appropriate may be taken up at the national level. It has been six years since the State of Telangana was formed. Our Hon. Chief Minister, Shri K. Chandrashekhar Rao, has undertaken several significant initiatives for social justice, particularly for farmers. Alongside this, substantial assistance has been provided for SC and ST welfare, especially by extending support for micro-irrigation to SC and ST farmers. A total of 134 residential schools have been established specifically for SC and ST students. Reservation has also been ensured for SC and ST communities in Farmers' Market Committees. In addition, residential colleges have been opened where SC and ST students who perform well academically and aspire to progress further, including pursuing education abroad, are supported. Under this initiative, each such student is being provided financial assistance of Rs. 20 lakh.

Sir, in India, apart from the State of Telangana, this facility has not been provided in any other State. Similarly, the Hon. Prime Minister's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme is a very good initiative, but along with Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, the welfare of the daughter is also very important. Her marriage is also very important. Financial constraints create difficulties in the marriage of these daughters, and to address this issue, our Hon. Chief Minister has made a provision to provide Rs. 1,16,000 for the

marriage of daughters belonging to the SC, ST and OBC communities.

You have copied Telangana itself; you have copied “Har Ghar Jal” policy. In the same manner, we have the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes for the welfare of the poor. Under Shaadi Mubarak, we make financial provisions even for Muslim families. For SC and ST development, and for their entrepreneurs, we have provided substantial funds. Along with this, we have given a Special Development Fund for SCs, STs, Minorities and OBCs, and special funds have been allocated for them. If even 500 persons of the SC or ST community reside in a habitation, we have made provisions for a separate Gram Panchayat so that they may have power like other citizens of the country. The most important issue for SC and ST people is land for living and farming. For those who do not have land, we have made a provision to allot three acres of land. Land is a State subject, but we want to demand from the Union Government that funds be allocated for this programme. Even today, many SC and ST people work as servants. They do not have land; therefore, we have undertaken the task of providing three acres of land to each family. So far, we have allotted land to 32,800 families. Since land is a State subject, we are demanding that financial support also be provided for these people. Our Government has also undertaken the task of providing special

professional training to promote SCs, STs and OBCs. For the categorisation of SCs and STs, we have passed a Resolution in the State and sent it to the Union Government. Similarly, for reservation for Muslims, our State has passed a Resolution and forwarded it to the Union Government. Please also give due consideration to this. I would like to submit that in this House everyone speaks about SCs, STs, Muslims and OBCs, but many do so only for electoral considerations. I humbly submit that funds should also be provided by the Union Government to promote people belonging to all these SC, ST and OBC categories. At present, the funds allocated by our State exceed the allocation made by you. While you have allocated Rs. 10,301 crore for the entire country, our Telangana State Government alone has allocated Rs. 1,600 crore. Unless these people are provided with financial support, they will not be able to move forward. I request that you kindly take my submissions into consideration.

SHRI PRAVEEN KUMAR NISHAD (SANT KABIR NAGAR): Hon. Chairperson Sir, I rise to speak on the Demands for Grants for the year 2020–21 of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Whenever the issue of social justice is raised, the attention of the entire country and this House is drawn towards reservation. The term reservation is not a new concept. Its fundamental basis lies in representation. Democracy must remain firmly established in the country, and if democracy is to be established in its true sense, the Constitution has provided for representation of all religions and all castes. In the process of development and participation, representation has been accorded to socially and economically backward classes.

Social backwardness essentially refers to the exploited sections of society. Those castes which were subjected to exploitation for thousands of years were provided representation when this country attained Independence. In the present times, however, the term reservation has, due to political issues, been portrayed in a somewhat negative light. This Constitution was framed to establish equality, liberty, justice and fraternity. Today, I wish to thank this Government and the Hon. Minister that the present Budget has been provided with the objective of addressing social justice and eliminating economic and social backwardness. I also wish to

express my gratitude that the Bharatiya Janata Party Government is moving forward with the spirit of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, I would like to draw your attention to a section of society in Uttar Pradesh which lives along riverbanks, lakeshores and ghats, namely the Nishad community and the fishing community. Even today, their condition reflects persistent social and economic backwardness. In order to address this, reservation was granted to them in Appendix F of the Census Manual, 1961. However, the existing anomalies in reservation and the Budget allocations meant for their development and related grants are, even today, not reaching them. The entire Budget continues to circulate within files alone. Under this people oriented Budget 2020 meant for their development, an increase of approximately 12.1 Percent has been made compared to the year 2018-19. Under skill development training, loans have already been provided to 1,35,087 individuals.

Hon. Chairperson, I would like to draw the attention of this House to the fact that the communities whose names I have mentioned were accorded Scheduled Caste status in the year 1961. Today, we speak of the vision of Ram Rajya. Ram Rajya signifies that when Lord Shri Ramchandra relinquished the trappings of

royalty and proceeded to the forest, not as a king but as an ascetic, he was accompanied by many companions. When he first reached Shringaverpur, he forged a bond of friendship with Nishadraj. The following day, he met Kevat. Subsequently, he encountered Jatayu, Sugriva, Bali and people from all sections of society. He also met Shabari. That was the ideal vision of Ram Rajya which he practised. Even today, Shringaverpur Dham exists on the banks of the River Ganga. At present, our Government is developing Shringaverpur Dham by spending approximately Rs. 186 crore. Efforts are also being made to uplift these communities, and for this, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, on the basis of the 1961 list, certificates are issued to all under serial number 11 in the name of Balmiki. Under serial number 24, Scheduled Caste certificates are issued in the names of Jatav, Dhusiya and Ghusiya. In the same list, at serial number 51, the synonymous castes of Majhwar are included, namely Kevat, Mallah, Rajbhar, Manjhi, Mujawar, Kashyap and Turha. All these communities should also be issued Scheduled Caste certificates on the same basis, because the budget being passed under Scheduled Castes and social justice is not reaching them, as they do not possess certificates. As a result, their

development is not taking place, and grants are not reaching their communities.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, these anomalies have increased to such an extent that agitations are taking place at various places in Uttar Pradesh. Today, our Government has focused its attention on this issue. However, the opposition parties are misusing that community, pushing them into agitations and thereby working to push our society backwards. Today, I wish to place this demand before the House that the Budget which has been passed is a very good Budget. It is adequate for envisaging social justice, for the development of communities and for the overall development of the country. However, one amendment is required, namely that those communities which participated in the Revolution of 1857 and which are still backward today, which continue to suffer from social backwardness and remain economically weak, should be given special attention and efforts should be made to bring them forward. ... (*Interruption*s) Therefore, concrete steps should be taken for their advancement. ... (*Interruption*s)

[English]

***DR. THOL THIRUMAAVALAVAN (CHIDAMBARAM):** Hon. Chairman Sir, Vanakkam. Thank you for allowing me to speak on the Demands for Grants pertaining to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The objective of social justice is to ensure equality for all. The Ministry is engaged in providing justice and ensuring equality for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, women, differently-abled individuals, and other sections of society.

But many of our institutions, including the Hon. Courts, are engaged in making an adverse impact on the cause of social justice in our country. The Hon. Supreme Court, in its recent judgment in the case of Mukesh Kumar vs. State of Uttarakhand, has stated that employment is not a fundamental right and that the Hon. Supreme Court cannot issue orders compelling the Union or State Government to provide employment. We met with the Hon. Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot, and submitted an application stating that the verdict of the Hon. Supreme Court in the Mukesh Kumar vs. State of Uttarakhand case is against social justice and will snatch away the rights to employment. We requested the Union Government to file an appeal

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil

in the Hon. Supreme Court against its verdict in the Mukesh Kumar vs. State of Uttarakhand case.

In the year 1976, a 7-Member Constitutional Bench, in the case of State of Kerala vs. N. M. Thomas, pronounced a verdict explaining Article 16 of the Constitution. Article 16 will have to be read as a whole, and Article 16(4) is not an exception but merely an emphatic statement of concordant principles stated in Article 16(1). The judgment said that Articles 16 and 16(1) should be seen together, thereby making employment mandatory. The judgment of the seven-Member Constitutional Bench is primary, fundamental, and strong enough to support the case.

However, since the recent judgment of the Hon. Supreme Court has made social justice and employment questionable, I urge the Union Government to appeal against the recent verdict of the Hon. Supreme Court. Moreover, a law should be legislated to protect reservations. I request that the law thus legislated to protect reservations should be included in the 9th Schedule to the Constitution of India.

On the direction of the Hon. Supreme Court, the Law Commission of India prepared a draft legislation on hate crimes. This draft legislation on hate crimes has been submitted to the Government. I urge that this draft legislation on hate crimes should

soon become law. The politics of hatred in the name of caste and religion is spreading in society. As a result, hate crimes are on the rise. I, therefore, urge the Union Minister to bring a bill to check hate crimes.

After dismantling the Planning Commission, NITI Aayog came into existence. As a result, the Union Government gave up Sub-Plans like the SC Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan. This has resulted in a reduction of funds for the SC and ST people of this country. I request that the Union Government pass legislation similar to that passed by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Due to the negligence of the Government, honor killings are on the rise every day. The Hon. Supreme Court has even directed that legislation be passed in this regard. However, the Government is in silent mode. I urge the Union Government to pass legislation to check honor killings.

Post-matric scholarships have been provided to students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Since the Union Government stopped releasing funds to the State Governments in this regard, the State Governments also did not pay attention. Similarly, opportunities to study abroad are also being snatched away from students. I, therefore, urge you to kindly

continue with the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme and the scheme aimed at helping students study abroad.

I have one more point to make. Not only Dalits, but supporters of Dalits are also being arrested and threatened on false allegations. Those who were arrested in the Bhima Koregaon case are illegally put behind bars. Even though the Maharashtra State Government came forward to grant bail to them, more shockingly, the case has been transferred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). I, therefore, urge the Union Government to do the needful to get the Bhima Koregaon case closed and release all those prisoners who are in jail.

***SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL (DOMARIYAGANJ):** The architect of our Constitution, Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, used to say that political democracy cannot survive without social and economic democracy. Even the former Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari Ji, claimed inequality to be the number one risk threatening the basic cohesiveness of the country; this is in light of the fact that the richest 1% in India own nearly 60% of the country's total wealth, while the bottom half of Indians, by contrast, collectively own only 2% of the national wealth. This makes it imperative for us to remind ourselves of the Gandhian Talisman and the need to wipe every tear in our society.

Guided by this fundamental spirit of the Constitution and committed to the welfare of weaker sections, our Government is working towards strengthening social justice and economic democracy to ensure ease of living for the common man. To meet its goal of educational empowerment for the SC population, a large portion of the department's budget is directed toward scholarships. The flagship scheme of the Department, the Post-Matric Scholarship for SC students, covers approximately 55 lakh students per year studying at the post-matriculation or post-secondary stage, right up to PhD. Between 2014 and 2018, 2,29,30,654 students

* Speech was laid on the Table

availed themselves of these scholarships, and an amount of Rs 10,388 crores was indeed utilized.

During the period from April 2014 to March 2018, 8,000 scholars were covered under the National Fellowship for Scheduled Castes scheme at a total cost of Rs 770.80 crore. An important act for the protection and dignity of Members of the SC and ST community is the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, which has been considerably strengthened by this Government, effective from 14.04.2016.

There are more than 2 crore 50 lakh Divyangjan in our country. Our Government is continuously working with the utmost sensitivity towards their empowerment and economic inclusion. The Government has enacted the ‘Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016’. Provision has been made for 4 percent reservation in Government jobs and 5 percent reservation in higher education for Divyangjan. In the last few years, over 6,000 camps have been organized, benefitting more than 9 lakh needy Divyangjan with necessary aids and assistive devices.

Under the ADIP scheme, grants in aid of Rs 430.98 crores were utilized during the 2014 to 2017 period, benefiting 7.03 lakh PwDs through 5,265 camps across India. During the given period, about

794 cases of surgery were undertaken, and all the cases were extended post-operative rehabilitation.

Moreover, for the empowerment of Divyangjan, the Accessible India Campaign was launched by the Prime Minister on 3.12.2015 to create universal accessibility for PwDs in the built environment, transport, and the information and communication technology (ICT) ecosystem. A web portal has also been created in this regard, where people can upload pictures and comments on the accessibility of any building.

Under the scheme for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drugs) Abuse, cost norms were increased by 30 percent for de-addiction centers supported by the department, effective from 01/04/2018. Also, for the first time, a National Survey to identify victims of drug abuse has been undertaken.

In the 151st birth year of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, the department is committed to correcting the historical injustice and indignity suffered by manual scavengers and rehabilitating them to a life of dignity. To this end, a National Survey of Manual Scavengers in 170 identified districts of 18 states has been undertaken, coordinated, and monitored by NSKFDC (National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation) in association with the representatives of State

Government and social organizations. Survey camps in 125 districts have been completed, and approximately 5,365 persons have been identified as manual scavengers. Manual scavengers identified in the National Survey are each being given a payment of One-Time Cash Assistance (OTCA) of Rs 40,000 and rehabilitated through subsequent measures. Further, the NSKFDC will focus on areas of training, rehabilitation, and awareness generation. Also, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program is being utilized to train 10,000 sanitation workers and waste pickers in safe, healthy, and mechanized cleaning.

Committed to the idea of "Empowerment not Appeasement," our Government is making intensive efforts for the economic, social, and educational empowerment of minorities. Employment opportunities have been provided to youth belonging to Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Parsi, and Jain communities through programs such as 'Seekho Aur Kamao,' 'Usttad,' 'Garib Nawaz Kaushal Vikas Yojana,' and 'Nai Roshni.'

Keeping in mind the objective of women's empowerment, for the first time since independence, the restriction on women above 45 years of age performing the Haj pilgrimage unaccompanied by their male relatives has been removed. In 2018 itself, more than 1,300 women went on the Haj pilgrimage without a Mehram.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2019 was recently passed by Parliament and received the assent of the President of India.

The experiences of senior citizens are a plethora of wisdom. Therefore, to provide due protection and respect to them, since 2014-15, the Ministry has disbursed Rs 190.62 crores to 1,595 NGOs toward the maintenance of old age homes across the country.

Moreover, under the Rastriya Vayoshri Yojana, a scheme meant for providing living-assistive devices to senior citizens, a total of 292 districts have been selected; assessment camps have been held in 52 districts and distribution camps held in 39 districts, benefitting 43,865 senior citizens. A total of 99,431 devices have been provided to senior citizens belonging to the BPL categories.

In conclusion, to reiterate our former Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari Ji, I would like to recall the tablet that was affixed to the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, which is in absolute consonance with the resolve of our Government under Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji:

Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:

I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

I hereby thank the Government again for all its measures in ensuring the empowerment of the deprived and aspirational in the country and express my complete support for the Demand for Grants 2020-21 for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

***SHRI BHAGWANT MANN (SANGRUR):** Thank you, Chairperson Sir, for giving me the opportunity to participate in the discussion on Demands for Grants for the Ministry of Social Justice.

Sir, all governments claim that they will do away with poverty. However, Sir, no government has been able to rein in the menace of poverty. Poverty can be checked only if our children become educated. The poor children will be able to come out of poverty once they get educated. There is a conspiracy to deliberately keep the children of the poor, the Scheduled Castes, etc., poor and uneducated. Leaders know that once these children get educated, they will become aware of their rights by becoming officers. Then, these children will not surround the leaders and plead with them for peanuts. So, quality education is the need of the hour.

Sir, we ask the government for employment, but the government provides us food grains as doles. These schemes are misused for getting votes. Shri Arvind Kejriwal ji, the Delhi C.M., has uplifted the standard of government schools. Who takes education in these schools? The children of the poor, Dalits, rickshaw-wallahs. In Delhi, the government schools have a 96% pass rate. However, private schools have a 93% pass rate. 135,000

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* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi

students have shifted from private schools to government schools in the last five years. It is because they have faith that quality education is being provided in government schools too. So, this process needs to be expedited. The standard of education in government schools should be improved everywhere.

Sir, sweepers and employees working under the Mid-day Scheme are also poor. They get hardly 1,600 or 1,700 rupees as wages. Most of them are working on a contract basis. Their jobs should be made permanent, or they should get semi-government employee status. Also, Sir, in Punjab, there is an acute problem regarding pre-matric and post-matric scholarships.

Colleges do not grant certificates and say that they have not received their scholarship amount from the centre. The Punjab government says that the centre has not given this amount. But the centre says that they have sent the money, but the Punjab government has misused it under another head. So, the Social Justice Ministry should keep monitoring the entire situation.

I would like to quote a few lines of Baba Nazami: “Dust has fallen on the mirror, but they keep on cleaning the walls.” Sir, the poor people need help. But subsidy is being granted to business tycoons.

Sir, I quote: “They are taking care of the cover; they are tearing apart pages. Poor people are not being taken care of. While on the shrines of the dead, money is being showered.” Sir, I urge the Ministers and the Prime Minister to give a satisfactory reply to my queries. The poor people cannot celebrate any festival like Diwali. They are finding it difficult to make both ends meet.

In the end, let me say that government schemes should reach the poorest of the poor. The rules of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana are very strict. It says you should not have a gas cylinder!

Sir, Santram Udasi, a firebrand Dalit poet from my constituency, says: “O Mother Earth, you already have a lot of problems in your courtyard. Poor people are rolling in deprivation. They cannot get the moon; what to talk of the sun? There are shortages everywhere. Children with running noses are leading miserable lives. They cannot get the moon; what to talk of the sun…”

[Translation]

DR. SANGHAMITRA MAURYA (BADAUN): Hon. Chairperson Sir, thank you very much.

Sir, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity given to me today to speak during the discussion on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. I extend my sincere thanks for this opportunity

Today, I rise to speak in support of social justice and empowerment. If we speak of social justice and empowerment in the present times, I would first like to express my gratitude and congratulations to the country's illustrious Prime Minister, Hon. Shri Narendra Modi, who has worked to provide Dalits and backward classes of this country with equal rights and ensured equal empowerment through social justice. At the same time, I would also like to congratulate the Hon. Minister, who, while fully discharging his responsibilities, has continuously introduced several commendable schemes, thereby securing entries in the Guinness Book of Records. Very recently, a scheme was implemented in Prayagraj which also found a place in the Guinness Book of Records. I would wish that such programmes are organised in our Parliamentary Constituency as well, so that the people of our constituency may also benefit from them.

Sir, questions are being raised from the opposite side about what this Government is doing. Earlier too, there have been several commissions, whether it was the Scheduled Castes Commission, the Scheduled Tribes Commission, the Women's Commission or the Backward Classes Commission. Many times, issues were raised in this House, but no one took the step of granting constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes. If any Government has given constitutional status to it, it is the Modi Government.

Certainly, today, when the National Commission for Backward Classes has received constitutional status with the blessings of Hon. MODI Ji, I would like to express my hope. Being a Member of the Backward Classes Welfare Committee, after attending several meetings, we have observed that even today, persons belonging to the backward classes, whether in Category A, B or C, are not adequately represented in important positions. There are vacancies in those posts. The biggest reason for this is that many times, when vacancies are notified, they are issued in very small numbers, two, three or four, due to which reservation cannot be implemented. Even after having 27 percent reservation, we are unable to avail the benefit of the full 27 percent. I would urge that appointments be notified in larger numbers so that the benefit of reservation can reach our young brothers and sisters. Let us continue to move

forward and include more people in the vision of Hon. Modi Ji of “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas”, and carry everyone forward together.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, I understand your indication, yet I seek your indulgence. Today, Hon. Modi Ji is consistently carrying everyone along, whether it concerns our brothers with disabilities, the education of underprivileged children, their living conditions, or the care of elderly parents. When we speak of women, as a woman myself, I stand here representing half of the country’s population. I wish to state that our Government is continuously concerned about women, and through various schemes, Hon. Modi Ji is working tirelessly to empower women and take them forward. A living example of this I heard just two days ago, when I met Hon. Modi Ji along with my father. He congratulated my father not because I had won from Badaun, but because he had ensured that his daughter was elected and sent to this House. That was the reason for his congratulations. This clearly proves that he wishes to see women move ahead and assumes their rightful place in society.

Sir, in view of the manner in which social evils are taking root in this country today, it appears that once again there is a need for a social reformer like Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The way heinous crimes are being committed against women and young girls in many places, and justice is not being delivered to them, is deeply

disturbing. Instead of ensuring justice, those who have governed and held power in this country until now themselves acknowledged during this discussion that Dalits and backward classes continue to be viewed through the lens of untouchability.

Sir, if we look at the newspapers, as one of our Members has just mentioned, there are reports of the manner in which petrol was poured into the private parts of a Dalit person. If we examine such incidents, read the newspapers and draw conclusions, it becomes evident that wherever Congress governments are in power even today, the highest instances of such atrocities and misconduct are occurring precisely in those places.

Whether it is a case where a groom is riding a horse during a wedding procession and is forcibly pulled down and assaulted, or where a Dalit is beaten mercilessly merely for sitting on a cot, or where the breasts of tribal girls are pressed to determine whether they are married or unmarried, or where it is said that a tent has become untouchable simply because it was given to the Valmiki community, all these incidents clearly show that the mindset remains unchanged even today. The thinking is still the same. Deceive Dalits, backward classes and the oppressed, and secure their votes. However, they have forgotten that today Dalits and backward classes are progressing under the leadership of Hon.

Modi Ji. They will certainly receive their rightful share and their rights.

Sir, according to a recent report, a grave injustice is about to be inflicted upon the backward classes. However, we have faith that Hon. Modi Ji is protecting us all and will not allow this to happen. Shri B. P. Sharma has submitted a report concerning the creamy layer. If that report is implemented, then for our young brothers and sisters from the backward classes who are ready to move ahead under the leadership of Hon. Modi Ji, it would feel as though just as they have begun their lives, Yama himself has come to stand before them.

Hon. Chairperson Sir, therefore, I would respectfully urge the Hon. Minister and, through you, the Government, that just as opportunities are being provided today, including in matters relating to reservation for the forward communities, and as every backward class is being given the chance to progress, this backward class too must be given equal opportunity to move forward.

Sir, I will conclude my remarks with four lines::

"ek saath chale, tab saath bane,

Saamaajikata nyaay, sadbhaav bane,

Ek svar mein, lay mein jajbaat bane,

Ho sab ek samaan, to sammaan bane."

[When all sections of society progress together, true national unity is achieved.

When social relations are founded on justice, mutual harmony is strengthened.

When collective aspirations are expressed in a common voice and shared purpose, social cohesion is ensured.

And when equality prevails for every citizen, dignity and respect for all are firmly established.]

With these words, I conclude my address. Thank you very much.

[English]

***DR. D. RAVIKUMAR (VILUPPURAM):** Hon. Chairman Sir, Vanakkam. The nation is in the 70th year after the introduction of the Constitution of India. The 130th birth anniversary celebrations will start on 14 April 2020. While addressing the occasion of the birth anniversary of revolutionist Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar last year, the Hon. Prime Minister, in praise of Dr. Ambedkar, said that it was because of the Constitution framed by him that he, being a person belonging to the Backward Class, could become the Prime Minister of the country. I am sure that there is no one who has not appreciated the contribution made by Dr. Ambedkar. Even in such a situation, I am pained to say that efforts are being made in every department of the Government to dilute the principle of equality enshrined in the Constitution framed by Dr. Ambedkar. I should say that Dr. Ambedkar not only ensured equality before the law through Article 14 of the Constitution, but he also ensured that no discrimination is made against anyone through Article 15 of the Constitution. Article 16 gives equal opportunities to all citizens. Through Article 17, he ensured the abolition of untouchability. By introducing the aspects of equality in the Constitution of our country, Dr. Ambedkar wanted India to be a nation known for upholding equality. I, therefore, urge

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil

the Union Government, through you, to honour Dr. Ambedkar by observing his birthday as a Day of Equality. The Post-Matric Scholarship is a right that we received even before we got independence. This was a right we obtained by fighting against the British even before independence. The present Government has brought changes to the Post-Matric Scheme by making the scholarship amount the same for all. Moreover, students will be receiving Post-Matric scholarships only after clearing an entrance exam. This effort will adversely affect the future of Dalit students in our country. I urge that no changes should be made to the existing Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme. Additionally, more funds should be allocated for the same. This will pave the way for making Dr. Ambedkar's dreams come true. Thank you.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: I request all Members to conclude their remarks within three minutes. Shri Malook Nagar

SHRI MALOOK NAGAR (BIJNOR): Hon. Chairperson Sir, thank you very much. Today, the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment are under discussion. Whether the Budget has been increased or decreased by 14 Percent or 17 Percent is important, but even more important is whether all institutions related to SCs, STs or OBCs, including competent authorities, appellate courts, commissions and statutory bodies, have been fully staffed by the Government so that justice can actually be delivered to them.

I am a Member of the Law and Justice Committee. When the data was placed before us there, it showed that, across the country, the total number of senior-level posts related to OBCs is 27,337. Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar Ji also comes from the same category and is a Minister in this Department. Out of these posts, only 14,704 positions are filled, while 12,632 posts are lying vacant. When nearly 45 Percent of senior-level appointments across the country have not been made and posts remain unfilled, how will justice be delivered to these people?

Sir, our Meena Sahab from Rajasthan was speaking earlier. He belongs to the SC/ST community and mentioned that OBCs constitute 41 Percent. Some say the figure is 60 Percent. We also believe that they are around 54–55 Percent, which includes Jats, Gurjars, Yadavs, Pals, Sainis, Kashyaps and many other communities. When such a large section across the country voted overwhelmingly for the BJP, and today nearly half of the top-level posts meant for them remain vacant, how will they receive justice? I would like to earnestly request the Hon. Minister, and many of our Gurjar community Members who are present here, including Shri Bidhuri Ji and Shri Pradeep Chaudhary Ji, that these appointments should be completed at the earliest.

One more issue also arises. Some say the OBC population is 41 Percent, while others say it is 60 Percent. I am not speaking about individual castes, but about the OBC category as a whole. Why should a nationwide census of OBCs not be conducted? Whether the figure is 54 Percent, 60 Percent, or even 48 Percent. In whichever State Government, in whichever part of the country these OBCs stand united, governments are formed with an absolute majority, even at the national level. Wherever they move collectively, power follows them and the government of the country is formed. However, when it comes to their social justice, whether

it is their IAS officers, their IPS officers, their judges, their MPs, or their Ministers, the situation is starkly different. In States where they constitute 55 Percent of the population, they have barely three Ministers. At the national level too, where they form 55 Percent, their representation among Ministers is very small. I will not name any individual caste, and even those who are appointed are not full Cabinet Ministers, but only Ministers of State.

I want justice to be done to them. The backward classes must be given their due rights. They have always stood at the forefront for the nation. The Gurjar community, to which I belong, has always fought for freedom. ... (*Interruption*s) For 300 years they ruled. ... (*Interruption*s)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude immediately with your final sentence.

SHRI MALOOK NAGAR: For nearly 300 years, the Gurjar–Pratihara dynasty ruled. In the order delivered by the Supreme Court in the Ayodhya matter, it has been clearly stated, based on the report of K. K. Ahmed, that the Gurjar–Pratiharas had constructed the temple at the site where the construction of the temple has now begun. I would like to say that justice must be done to the backward classes. In the trust formed for the construction of the temple, whether there are 11 trustees or even 100, the backward

classes, Jats, Gurjars, Pal, Saini, Kashyap and all other backward communities must be given due representation. ... (*Interruption*s) Thank you very much.

[English]

DR. BHARTI PRAVIN PAWAR (DINDORI): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this year's budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. I am a daughter of tribes, and this topic is close to my heart.

At the outset, kindly allow me to express my gratitude towards the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Modi ji; Hon. Finance Minister, Shrimati Sitharaman; Hon. Shri Gehlot; Hon. Shri Athawale; Hon. Shri Kataria; and Hon. Shri Krishan Pal for increasing the total budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. It is a matter of pride that our Government has continuously increased allocation and ensured focus on this section of our society over the last six years.

As such, most of our Government's schemes are meant for uplifting the weaker sections of society. Awas Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, Kaushal Vikas Yojana, Mudra Yojana, and many of our schemes for our farmer brothers and sisters are just a few examples. Having said this, our schemes in this particular Ministry bring a sharp focus on social justice, and equally importantly, on empowerment.

I want to focus on a few suggestions today. The increase in allocation for Central scholarships under the Ministry to Rs. 545 crore; the increase in allocation for empowerment through education to Rs. 3,742 crore; the increase in allocation for backward classes to Rs. 1,750 crore; and the increase in grants-in-aid for States to Rs. 7,697 crore is almost welcome. Furthermore, I understand that the National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation is investing heavily in skill development, and its allocation has been increased to Rs. 180 crore. Last but not least, through you, Sir, may I draw the attention of this House to the increase in allocation of overseas scholarships to Rs. 55 crore and the allocation of Rs. 125 crore for venture capital funds for the SCs and backward classes? Indeed, this is New India, and it is aspirational for each and every person. All in all, the allocation is the best it could have been.

With your kind permission, Sir, I want to humbly share a few suggestions. Despite the increase in scholarships, we still have unmet demands. We must try to help the last person in the queue. Therefore, perhaps we can think of two solutions. Firstly, can we also provide an interest subsidy on educational loans? Secondly, can we introduce some notion of candidates' merit in the allocation of scholarships? This would encourage good performance.

Similarly, boys' and girls' hostels are a very important issue. Can we provide either through this Department or through the MHRD a larger scheme for the construction of high-quality hostels? It is fantastic that we have provided a major allocation for venture capital funding. Can we also add venture debt funding because this will accommodate a larger number of beneficiaries?

Lastly, I feel that encouragement to work hard and to boost the confidence of our weaker sections can do more wonders than we can think of. Therefore, can we think of a communication strategy to build hope and confidence and take all our weaker sections along? Can we make an allocation specifically for such communication?

Lastly, I would say that inspired by the ideology of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the father of our Constitution, our Hon. Prime Minister, Modi ji, is working for the progress of India, which has led to Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, and Sabka Vishwas. So, I support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

I once again thank you very much for giving me this chance to speak.

DR. K. JAYAKUMAR (TIRUVALLUR): Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to register a few of my views in this august forum. I would like to mention a few words about the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. I would request the Hon. Minister to make a note of it. This Commission is entrusted with the job of safeguarding the services of the SCs, their educational development, atrocities against them, and economic development. I have been associated with this Commission for a while. As far as my knowledge is concerned, this is not an effective arrangement; and this Commission is hardly doing anything. Even the funds the Government has provided are also proportional to their performance. Only Rs. 25 crore has been provided in the Budget for the National Commission for Scheduled Castes. No tangible benefit has come to the people. It is not because of the Commission; it is because of the powers that have been given to the Commission. This Commission can only make recommendations; it is not binding on anybody. Therefore, any recommendation it makes is wasteful. I request the Hon. Minister to kindly go for an amendment of Article 33(a) for two things.

One, it should play a judiciary role if at all you really want to make this Commission work. Two, within a reasonable time, the report submitted to the Hon. President should be submitted to the House because, for a long time, there has been no report of the

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes furnished in this House. It is submitted to the President. He has to circulate it to the other departments with the recommendation only, which takes two or three years. It is a wasteful exercise. I strongly request the Hon. Minister to take up this matter and see that the Commission is functional because it is the core agency available to address the grievances of the people.

Regarding the scholarship, the information has not yet been made official. There is a scheme that is coming. I have gone through the draft of this scheme. It is called the PM Young Achievers Scheme. This scholarship scheme is going to replace the scheme that had been brought by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in 1944, fighting with the British in those days when he was a Member of the Viceroy's Council. In the present scholarship scheme which is being considered, the students have to write one more exam. Already, five exams have to be written by the students. This is adding more exams. Now, there are seven exams.

Sir, regarding the rehabilitation of manual scavengers, this time Rs. 110 crore has been provided, and last time, Rs. 99 crore was provided. Every year, the Government is providing the money, but there is no meaning in it because, in 1992 itself, this scheme was to be scrapped, and scavenging had to be stopped. There is no point in

doing it every year. You give the money in one shot and close the scheme.

SHRI DNV. SENTHILKUMAR S. (DHARMAPURI): Sir, first, I would like to honour the contributions made by the great social reformers and those who have fought for social justice, Dr. Sahu, Shri Jyotiba Phule, and Dr. Ambedkar. It was because of them that we fought for social justice. With our Dravidian principles, during Thanthai Periyar, we enacted the self-respect marriage law in 1967, wherein marriage can take place without the help of a priest. It was also enacted in Singapore, Malaysia, and among Tamil communities, but it is yet to be enacted across India. I urge the Hon. Minister to make the self-respect marriage law and enact it throughout India.

Our great visionary, Dr. Kalaignar, gave a respectful meaning to differently abled people like Maatruthirunaligal. I urge the Government to provide differently abled people and transgenders with reservation in the government setup. I also urge the Government to robotize and mechanize sewage cleaning. Regarding bonded labour, people who are rescued should be given more compensation, and rehabilitation should also be there. I would also like to reiterate that Kurumba and Narikurava Tribes should be brought into the Schedule Tribes category so that they can have much more upliftment in society.

I would like the Hon. Minister’s intervention in a particular case of inter-caste marriage which recently took place in Tamil Nadu. A

police case has been filed. The bride has been missing right after the marriage, and the family has been threatened and beaten. In spite of CCTV footage being available, the police are not taking action against Elamathi and Selvam. I urge the Hon. Minister to take immediate steps to rescue them.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Member Shri Ramesh Bidhuri ji is the last speaker in this discussion. The proceedings of the House are extended until the conclusion of his speech.

18.00 hrs

SHRI RAMESH BIDHURI (SOUTH DELHI): Hon. Chairperson Sir, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak. This is a very sensitive Grant that has been placed before the House by the Government in the form of Demands for Grants. The Hon. Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Thawar Chand Ji, and Shri Kishan Pal Ji are present here. I would like to congratulate them because the vision of Hon. Modi Ji is clearly reflected in ensuring the upliftment, welfare and dignified progress of socially backward classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The vision of Hon. Modi Ji is evident from the fact that there has been a 14 Percent increase in this year's allocation. This is not an election year, otherwise my friends in the Opposition would have raised a hue and cry alleging that the 14 Percent increase in the Budget was due to elections. A total Budget of Rs. 1,38,740 crore has been allocated. This Budget has certainly been enhanced for that section of society which Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Ji had envisioned through his philosophy of the upliftment of the last person standing in the queue. Many of my colleagues have repeatedly stated that this Budget for social justice should be increased further. However, I would like to place it on record that in the social sector, whether we speak about persons

with disabilities, this Government has worked extensively for their social upliftment and for providing them with facilities. In the 70-year history of this country, this has happened for the first time that the Government organised camps within Parliament itself and distributed assistive instruments worth crores of rupees to persons with disabilities.

The Government has undertaken the task of providing assistive instruments. Hon. Modi Ji has ensured Budgetary Grants for the dignity and upliftment of the backward classes. Nearly 7.5 Percent of the allocation has been earmarked exclusively for Scheduled Tribes, the tribal communities, whether they live along the sea coast as fishermen or reside in forests and hilly regions, for their overall development through this Budget. Through this Budget, special provisions have been made in the form of grants and loans for meritorious children who otherwise do not get opportunities to pursue education, so that these capable children may progress and develop. Baba Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar had also said, “Education is the most essential.” This was his core mantra. Many people have exploited his name for their own benefit; even Shri Malook Ji’s party has done so. However, the work of developing the five sacred sites associated with Baba Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar has been undertaken only by Hon. Modi Ji. This section

of society deserves respect, which had never been accorded in the past 70 years of our history. I would like to ask those who earn their livelihood in the name of Dalits to tell this House whether, even in a single Assembly constituency where that community has even twenty thousand votes, they do not sell party tickets for Rs. 1 crore. But has any leader from their side ever spent party funds to conduct the marriages of even fifty daughters from that community? I want to ask this question. In the name of social upliftment, they merely run their own livelihood. At present, under the guise of opposing the Citizenship Amendment Act in the name of the minority community, people from the Scheduled Caste community are being instigated. ... (*Interruption*s) You may speak after me. ... (*Interruption*s)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Ramesh Bidhuri Ji, please address the House while looking towards the Chair.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMESH BIDHURI: An attempt is being made to mislead them. The Hon. Supreme Court had issued an order. … (*Interruption*s) Malook Ji, what are you saying? This is astonishing! … (*Interruption*s) There was an order of the Supreme Court. In the Shah Bano case, the order of the Supreme Court was violated. In that case, the Supreme Court had issued directions to uphold the

rights and dignity of women, but under pressure from certain orthodox elements, the Congress altered that order through legislation and undermined women's empowerment. In contrast, to ensure that the Scheduled Caste community is not subjected to injustice, when the Supreme Court issued certain directions, this Government enacted legislation to safeguard the rights and entitlements of the Scheduled Castes. In the seventy years of history of this country, no political party had taken such decisive steps to secure justice and rights for the Scheduled Caste community.

18.03 hrs

(Hon. Speaker *in the Chair*)

Now I wish to come to the issue of OBCs. In the year 1953, the Kaka Kalelkar Committee was constituted. That Committee had recommended that OBCs should be granted constitutional status. This Committee was set up by Pandit Nehru Ji. It functioned until 1955, yet until the year 1993, nothing substantive was done for the OBC community. At this point, Nagar Sahab is standing up to indulge in unnecessary advocacy, perhaps fearing the loss of his ticket. I would like to ask what was done until 1993 regarding the constitutional status that OBCs rightfully deserved. In 1993, merely

a commission was constituted, but that commission ... * was created. It was under this Government, in the year 2018, that the task of granting constitutional status to the OBC Commission and empowering it to safeguard the rights and entitlements of the OBC community was undertaken by Hon. Modi Ji. Others have merely engaged in rhetoric, misleading and provoking people. Therefore, through you, I wish to congratulate Hon. Modi Ji that under his leadership, such historic steps have been taken in this country for the upliftment and empowerment of this society.

They level allegations against this organisation. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Ji had given the clarion call that those governments are dishonest which fail to ensure the upliftment of the last person. In this society, the last person was the one whose rights and entitlements had been steadily eroded. Therefore, for the upliftment of the last person, when a Government was formed under the leadership of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji, a number of welfare schemes were introduced, whether relating to the poverty line or housing for the poor. These people remained in power for seventy years, yet they merely indulged in corruption and plundered the country through scams such as 2G, 3G and the coal scam. When Hon. Modi Ji came to power, his Government ensured the provision

* Not recorded

of LPG connections under the Ujjwala Yojana. Whether it is the construction of houses for this section of society or the provision of toilets, all these initiatives have been implemented through this Government and through the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Sir, all this has been delivered under the leadership of Thawar Chand Ji.

Through you, Sir, I would like to make a submission to the Ministry. There are many poor families belonging to the Scheduled Caste category who do not educate their daughters solely because an excessive amount of money is required for their marriage. Sir, there exists the Prime Minister's Relief Fund through which financial assistance is extended to victims. In the same spirit, through the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, there should be a provision of at least Rs. 51,000 as kanyadaan for daughters of such poor families. This would give confidence to families belonging to the Scheduled Caste community that support for their daughter's marriage would come from Hon. Modi Ji. As a result, instead of saving money for marriage, they would invest in their daughter's education. This is my earnest demand, made through you. I would further urge the Ministry to ensure that the initiatives undertaken by Hon. Modi Ji through Members of Parliament actually reach the common people. Facilities are being provided, and those who receive them acknowledge it, but those

who are deprived do not feel the impact. Earlier, camps were organised for persons with disabilities. In a similar manner, the Social Welfare Department should organise such camps at the tehsil level, so that the grants meant for the education of Scheduled Caste children can be accessed through a single application form. This would ensure that beneficiaries do not have to run from pillar to post, and that Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and OBC communities are truly uplifted. I am deeply grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak. Thank you very much.

***SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY (PALI):** I extend my gratitude to Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Thawar Chand Gehlot, for taking new initiatives in the field of social justice and empowerment and for making additional budgetary provisions in this Budget.

I would like to state that under the leadership of our Prime Minister, schemes have consistently been formulated with the vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. He has always remained vigilant with regard to the development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes. In this Budget, an amount of Rs. 11,429 crore has been allocated, which is 14 Percent higher compared to the previous year. Along with making appropriate arrangements to completely eradicate manual scavenging, the Budget has provided a 30 Percent increase in allocations for scholarships for students belonging to special categories, raising the amount to Rs. 545 crore. I would also like to inform the House that, keeping in view the limited interest shown by States in the post-matric scholarship scheme, the Union Government has decided that 75 Percent of this scholarship will now be borne by the Union

* Speech was laid on the Table

Government. Through this scheme, students from special categories will gain new and better opportunities in higher education.

I congratulate the Hon. Minister for the initiative to ensure 100 Percent Direct Benefit Transfer of benefits under various schemes. The decision to provide protection and preservation to local languages spoken by tribal communities across the country is also commendable and worthy of appreciation.

I would also like to thank the Hon. Minister for making efforts to extend assistance to persons with disabilities and elderly people suffering from various age-related problems in my Parliamentary Constituency, Pali, by organising camps under the ALIMCO and Vayoshri schemes. I would like to bring to the notice of the Hon. Minister that the equipment allocated to the said beneficiaries is still lying near the district headquarters and, due to certain reasons, could not be distributed so far. I request that necessary directions be issued to the concerned officials in this regard and that additional camps be organised for the remaining beneficiaries. I would further request the Hon. Minister that relaxation in the rules for distribution of battery-operated tricycles is also essential. Even if persons with disabilities in the 50 to 80 Percent category receive battery-operated tricycles, they are often unable to make effective use of them. However, if the same battery-operated tricycles are provided to

persons in the age group of 15 to 40 years with 20 to 40 Percent disability, they can become a means of livelihood as well as a mode of transport for commuting to and from work.

I would also like to convey the concerns of those brothers and sisters with disabilities whose percentage of disability is increasing day by day. In such cases, it is essential that their disability certificates are reviewed within the prescribed time frame and fresh certificates are issued, so that they may continue to avail themselves of the benefits of government schemes.

In conclusion, I support the discussion on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for the year 2020–21.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, you have already spoken. Are there any other Hon. Members who wish to speak? All Hon. Members have spoken.

Hon. Members, the Hon. Minister will reply on Monday at 12 noon.

... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: We are not getting any opportunity to decide. Everything is being decided by them.

HON. SPEAKER: The Speaker will decide.

… *(Interruptions)*

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: Then they will immediately take up the Demands for Grants on Tourism. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: No.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF COAL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI): The Hon. Speaker has made the decision.

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: The Chair has directed that the Hon. Minister will reply on Monday at 12 noon.

The House stands adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. on Monday, the 16th of March, 2020.

18.08 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, March 16, 2020/Phalguna 26, 1941 (Saka)

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Published under Rules 379 and 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Seventeenth Edition)