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Title: Need to protect the rights of women, young girls and children suffering from HIV/AIDS.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): Sir, the new data reveals that in our country, HIV/AIDS has affected nearly 2.47 million people which constitutes 0.36 per cent of our total population.

Sir, over the past two years, the number of women and girls infected with HIV has increased in every region of the world. In Delhi alone, in 2004, it was 945 and as on January 2006, it was 2592. Among the youth, 75 per cent of people living with HIV are females. Most of the women who suffer from HIV/AIDS are in the prime of their productive lives. Often 'positive' women who have been abandoned by their husbands and ostracized from their communities. Widows who have lost their husbands to HIV are very often refused their share in their husband's property. 'Positive' children are not permitted admission to study in schools.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government of India to take immediate steps for setting up Permanent Legal Aid Clinic with the participation of women lawyers throughout the HIV/AIDS infected areas with the objective of helping women, young girls and children living with HIV/AIDS to get medical treatment, to assist them to acquire property rights, to get maintenance, to assist getting employment, to get Government schemes like old age pension, monetary benefits for destitute women and widows and education for their children. Thank you.