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Title: Regarding increasing poverty level among Scheduled Tribes population in the country.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (BAHARAMPUR): Sir, the country has been committed to deliver opportunities to all sections of the people of our society since Independence. We have enshrined in our Constitution reservation for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. We have initiated a plethora of schemes in order to upgrade the lives of those people, especially, who are vulnerable. It is striking to note that still the rate of poverty is declining in India, but in the same tone I have to acknowledge that the rate of poverty which is declining has demonstrated a lower percentage among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in comparison to the upper caste people. It means that still there is a serious mismatch of poverty between Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the upper caste population in our country. It needs to be corrected.

Insofar as Scheduled Tribes are concerned, Scheduled Tribes are worst off in Madhya Pradesh. There are 40 per cent of Scheduled Tribes in Madhya Pradesh who do not own any basic consumer durables.

A number of *Dalit* proponents are expressing their views everyday in this House. But it is also intriguing to note that *Dalits* are worst off in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Orissa, where a third do not own any such asset.

I also appreciate the endeavour of other States, especially, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Punjab where the asset owning of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is much higher than the other sections of the population.

MR. CHAIRMAN : What do you like to tell me? You should come to the point. What do you want from the Government?

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : Sir, first of all, I have to draw the attention of this House.

MR. CHAIRMAN : During 'Zero Hour', you cannot just go on speaking.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : Sir, there is a serious mismatch in the distribution of wealth. There is a regional disparity insofar as ownership of assets is concerned. It is all evident that Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are lagging behind in owning the assets and minimum consumer durables. Only three or four States are recognised as exceptional in upgradation of the people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Therefore, I would urge upon this Government to take serious measures so as to minimize the disparity which has been prevalent. Otherwise, the goals of this Government will remain evasive.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already mentioned all these things.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY : Sir, the newly released Census 2011 data shows that while 17.8 per cent of households across India do not own a phone, a computer, TV, radio, bicycle or any vehicle, this proportion is 22.6 per cent for Scheduled Castes, 37.3 per cent for Scheduled Tribes and 14 per cent for "others".

Sir, I would appreciate your State which has provided more and more opportunities to the backward people of our society. I would urge upon the Government to take special measures so as to minimize these disparities.