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Title: Need to abolish death penalty.

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Hon. Speaker Madam, I thank you for the opportunity to raise under Zero Hour the need to abolish the death penalty. Capital punishment cannot be justified as an effective instrument of deterrence. Statistics from the last 30 years suggest that there is no direct co-relation between the number of death penalty executions and the deterrence of crimes. In other words, hanging people does not deter crime.

The Law Commission in its report on death penalty has also reiterated this observation. Additionally, the application of the death penalty in India through the rarest of the rare doctrine has left room for subjectivity and bias which is a worrying basis to take a human life. The State should not reduce itself to the level of killers. More than 70 of the member countries of the United Nations have abolished the death penalty and a further 25 per cent have not used it in the last 10 years. A punishment which in our country has largely affected the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of society is an aberration in a healthy democracy.

I see that the Minister of State for Home Affairs is sitting there. I therefore urge the Government to introduce a provision to abolish the death penalty and instead strengthen a preventive and reformative system of justice. That is the only way that we can live up the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi in our own society.

HON. SPEAKER:

Shri Dushyant Chautala,

Adv. Joice George and

Shri Shivkumar Udasi are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Dr. Shashi Tharoor.