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Title: Regarding presentation and passing of Women's Reservation Bill.

SHRIMATI P.K. SHREEMATHI TEACHER (KANNUR): Madam, we know that 50 per cent of the population is women in our country. But in Parliament, women's representation is only 11 per cent. The spirit of our freedom movement is reflected in our Constitution which guarantees equality regardless of gender, caste or class. Yet, this equality has not been realized, and women continue to face exclusion and discrimination in their public and private lives. This is the case, despite the fact that women's political participation is guaranteed by the Constitution. Ensuring women's political leadership is essential for building a strong and vibrant democracy. Therefore, an affirmative action in the form of reservation of seats for women in State Legislatures and Parliament is imperative. The passage of the Seventy-third and Seventy-fourth amendments to the Constitution in 1993 addressed women's exclusion from political participation at the grass-roots level. The implementation of the reservation system has meant that over 1.5 million women now hold position in Panchayati Raj Institutions and local civic bodies. The emergence of effective women leaders has led many States to increase the reservation of seats for women to 50 per cent. However, woman's voice is still excluded from the higher levels of decision-making process and bodies. Successive Governments have been stalling the Bill in the name of consensus whereas all we need to do is pass a Bill in Parliament with the majority of votes.

So, in this august House, I request the Government and the hon. Speaker that the Women's Reservation Bill be put in the next Session of Parliament and to pass it. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri P.K. Biju, Shri Sankar Prasad Datta and Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shrimati P.K. Shreemathi Teacher.