

an>

Title: Need to repeal Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958.

DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA (INNER MANIPUR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to raise a matter of urgent public importance on this auspicious day of International Women's Day. I would like to pay my sincere and humble best wishes to all hon. women Members of this august House and to the women of the world.

On this day, I do feel that it is significant to mention about the marathon hunger striker, Irom Chanu Sharmila, the Iron Lady of Manipur, who has been on indefinite fast for almost 16 years now. During these days, she has been nose-fed. Sharmila had been freed, she resumed fast and then she was taken into judicial custody. This is nothing new, for this is what has been happening ever since the Iron Lady decided to launch her fast, to demand the repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958, in November, 2000. Once again Sharmila is under judicial custody and once again there is not the slightest hint that she is ready to give up her fast. Rightly so, the annual turn of events will continue. The term 'Armed Forces Special Powers Act' is redundant, infamous, inhuman and, most importantly, terrifying in the so-called troubled regions of Jammu and Kashmir and the North East. Insurgent activities and violence are the two fundamental premises which determine whether a particular area should be categorized as 'disturbed' or not.

I have been urging the Union Government for the immediate repeal of this infamous Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958. I am supported by the fact that as many as four Committees/Conferences, namely, the Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee of 2005, the Second Administrative Reforms Commission of 2007, the Working Group on Confidence Building Measures in Jammu and Kashmir of 2007, and lately, the Justice J.S. Verma Committee of 2012 have recommended the repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. It is also a fact that many people had been killed in 'fake encounters', 'several cases of enforced disappearances', 'rampant cases of rapes' and 'custodian killings' had been recorded in the country because of this infamous military Act. Also, as around 169 countries had recommended the repeal of this draconian Act. Prime Minister Narendra Modi says that one of his missions is to rid India of a 'maze of useless laws' – India's archaic and obsolete laws which are seen by many as its most burdensome legacy.

Hence, I do strongly urge upon the Union Government to immediately intervene and direct the Union Home Ministry to reconsider its decision to reject the Jeevan Reddy Committee Report to repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act and order the immediate repeal of this law.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are some more hon. Members who want to raise some important issues and they are waiting for a long time. So I request that they may be allowed one minute each to raise their matters.