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Title: Need to have a monitoring mechanism at the Union level to intervene in the functioning of Ashram schools.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam Speaker, I would like to raise a very serious issue during 'Zero Hour' and I hope the Government will respond to it.

Madam, it is reported that 882 tribal children have died in State run Residential Schools, which we call Ashram Schools, across the country during the last five years and the maximum death has occurred in Maharashtra between 2010 and 2015. An astounding number of 684 children died in Maharashtra alone during this period. Odisha also has suffered because of sexual abuse and this has also been reported. The next State where more children died is Gujarat.

The question here is, what the Central Government can do, because it is a State Subject. Ashram Schools are run by State Governments. But the Central Government provides funds to respective Ashram Schools through State Governments. When a question was posed to the Tribal Affairs Minister of the Union Government, he said that they cannot have any say in the running of these schools. That is all right. The Central Government is monitoring the construction aspect of Ashram Schools, but it is not monitoring the teaching aspect of those schools. But at least the Central Government can monitor as to how these schools are run. Respective Members of Parliament have been asked, as members of the Vigilance and Monitoring Committee, to see as to how this money is being spent. But we do not have the power to go into the criminal aspect of it and it becomes a police issue.

When the attention of the previous Tribal Affairs Minister of the UPA Government Shri Kishore Chandra Deo was drawn, he said, Central Government can intervene. So it is not that the Central Government cannot intervene.

Therefore, my request to the Government, through you, is that when poor administration is the issue, the Central Government can intervene in the matter and we can have a monitoring mechanism at the Union level which can look into this aspect because they are innocent children. They are admitted to Ashram Schools to get educated so that they can come up in life and when they die because of malnourishment and other reasons they die, it is a very serious issue which needs to be looked into.

माननीय अध्यक्ष :

कुंवर पण्डित सिंग वन्देल एवं

श्री भैरो प्रसाद मिश्र को श्री भर्तृहरि महताब द्वारा उठाए गए विषय के साथ संबद्ध करने की अनुमति प्रदान की जाती है।