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Title: Discussion on the need to have stringent legislation to check increasing atrocities against women and children in the country.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Now, Item No. 12, Shri P. Karunakaran.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Sir, will you take this item today itself?

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Yes, you can start now.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : Sir, I am thankful to you for permitting me to participate in this discussion on a very important issue. ...(*Interruptions*) I would like to initiate and participate in the discussion under Rule 193 regarding the atrocities against women and children in our country. ...(*Interruptions*) We have been discussing this subject in almost all the Sessions of Parliament. You are also well aware of this fact. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Let there be order in the House.

...(*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please do not stand here.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : But this does not mean that the discussion is meaningless. ...(*Interruptions*) Sir, let the House be in order. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please take your seats. Please do not stand there.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : We have been discussing this subject in almost all the Sessions of Parliament. You are also well aware of this fact, but this does not mean that this discussion is meaningless. There should be a fruitful discussion and interaction on this subject, especially from the hon. woman Members. While initiating this discussion, I would like to make it clear that the discussion on 'atrocities against women and children' is not confined to them alone. It is the responsibility of the Government as well as of the society. With that wide angle in view, I am glad to initiate and participate in the discussion.

Sir, it is ironic to say that India has raised the symbol of peace and non-violence on the one side and, at the same time, our women and children are bearing the brunt of violence, domestic as well as public, physical as well as emotional, and also mental, on the other side.

Violence against women can be viewed in the historical perspective for, to a large extent, it is linked to her status in society also. In the early days, women enjoyed relatively comfortable position. Gradually, violence against them began to be practised. The doors of educational institutions, economic, social, political and cultural opportunities were closed to them. Even their personal freedom in respect of movement, diet, dress, marriage, etc., got curtailed. Every effort was made to make them meek and also docile.

I do agree that the society is dominated by men and most of the decisions are taken by the dominant males. This is one of the main issues that I would like to focus on, while discussing this issue.

It is viewed that the continuous movements and struggles launched especially by the women's organisations have changed the situation. A number of legislations were passed, and many administrative steps were taken by various Governments, either by the Central Government or the State Government. However, when we analyse, the present situation becomes strange and shocking. Every day, we read in daily newspapers and see in visual media the series of attacks and atrocities against women and children in the form of rape, sexual abuse, death, molestation, etc. We cannot even imagine the magnitude of atrocities being committed in day time either in cities or in villages.

In 2013, as per the Annual Report of the National Crime Bureau, 24,923 rape cases were reported from all over India, out of which 24,770 rapes were committed by the relatives, which is really strange and shocking. As per 2012 statistics, New Delhi has the highest number of rape records among Indian cities. We cannot proudly claim that it is the Capital City of India. The highest number of rape records is in Delhi, while Jabalpur has the highest percentage of the incidence of reported rapes.

Last week, we heard in the news that two young girls in a rural village were gang-raped and hanged on a tree. How can we imagine that? Another news story reported that four young girls were attacked and sexually assaulted in a village in Haryana; the earlier one was in Uttar Pradesh. One week ago, a mother of two children was forcefully taken in an auto rickshaw and she was gang-raped by four persons, and then she was thrown out of the auto rickshaw by the wayside. There was also a shocking incident where a working woman travelling in a passenger train, this has happened in Kerala, was attacked by a passenger. She was pulled out of the train, brutally attacked, raped and she died on the spot itself.

We have the sad memory of two young children, who were waiting for the bus, being raped and killed. This has happened in Delhi. They were offered a lift, taken to a lonely place in Delhi and were then cruelly and brutally raped; later, both these students were killed.

In yet another shameful incident, a rape of a minor girl has taken place. A 70 year old teacher has been arrested for sexually assaulting an 8 year old girl in Bengaluru. According to sources, this heinous crime took place inside a private school premises located in South Bengaluru. Moreover, in the last week, Bengaluru was outraged and massive protests were witnessed all across the city after a 6 year old girl was raped at a high profile school on 2nd July. But the matter was reported only on 14th July. Sir, it is again shocking. In this case also, two gymnastic instructors of the school

were arrested. It means that our students are not safe. Our children are not safe in the schools. They are not safe in the bus. They are not safe in the way they are travelling. How can we imagine all these issues which we are facing in this country? I can give many examples irrespective of the State, place and time. This is really a very dangerous phase which we are passing through now. In many reports, women raise the question about her safety in public.

We could not forget the shocking attack on a medical student in a moving bus in Delhi with her colleague. The world's attention turned to India after this horrific attack in the year 2012. We witnessed that Delhi had come to a standstill. A large number of women were on the street. They marched towards the Prime Minister's house. They also marched towards the President's house. There was a day and night continuous protest for one week with the demand to form a new legislation. We have seen a strong agitation from our sisters and mothers in the streets of the Delhi.

Sir, the Government has taken some important steps to combat the violence against women. I remember that the Parliament had worked day and night to form a new legislation. After one month of that incident, the Verma Commission made recommendations to change the India's Criminal Law Code which are designed to provide quick trials and enhance the punishment of the accused. This was seen as an important step to acknowledge. But the broader approach is needed to combat sexual violence and the Government needs to take serious action. After this attack, a scheme, in her name *Nirbhaya*, has been introduced to provide adequate financial assistance to all the rape victims. But here also, I am sorry to say that the scheme lacks proper implementation. The Government must take immediate steps for its implementation.

Sir, Indian officials promised to take stringent steps against massive crimes which are affecting women in cities and villages. Then, officers must be able to fulfil their promises that the women and children in India are safe. Has the Government got that will power and also the administrative capacity? These are the main questions that I want to pose when we discuss the very important issue in this august House.

Sir, we discussed this issue after 67 years of Independence. It is a shame for us that women and children are not safe in India. We have spent much energy for the policy reforms, for the judicial review, for the criminal process and also for sentencing the accused. Thanks to our media persons for disclosing many of the criminal atrocities committed against women and children, irrespective of the State, place and time. We witnessed the very cruel face of the accused in many cases. The new research would inform us what action must be taken to secure women at public places and how community can work together to make sure that attacks like 2012 will never happen. I do not blame the Government alone. But the community, as a whole, has to take this issue together. When we go deep into the subject with facts and figures, the situation is more alarming. According to the Crime Bureau Report, 2012, rape cases to the extent of 85.1 per cent are still awaiting for trial.

It is also a big crime that trial is awaiting. We can see undue delay taking place for investigation and other proceedings. There is a very long process involved. First, they have to prepare the crime report. Second comes the First Information Report (FIR). Then comes the Investigation Completion Report. The fourth is that the Police have to prepare a report to establish the case. Then comes the trial report and lastly the conviction. So much time is consumed due to various reasons. I would like to say that there is no excuse for undue delay especially when the nature of the crime is so serious. I think, the Government should take this issue with utmost importance.

The highest number of victims and majority of the victims are in the age group of 18-30 years. Almost 90 per cent of the rape cases lead to charges. According to an estimate, Indian Courts have completed the trial process of 14,717 rape cases. It means that a large number of cases are still pending. It is also to be noted that there are a large number of cases which are not registered, maybe due to the fear and also due to the approach of the police also. We have the record of the registered cases. But the cases which are not registered may be higher than this.

It is also shocking that many children and minors have also become the victims of these brutal attacks. Of all the rape cases, 12.5 per cent cases in India are of minors. According to the Sample Survey, in every one lakh minors, 7200 minors have become victims of rape each year in India. This really ruined their future also. They are minors and they cannot go to any other schools. They will be led to prostitution and all that. That also is a very serious situation that we are facing.

According to one survey, in every twenty minutes, a woman in India is getting raped. But during the last couple of years, the country witnessed a notorious sexual violence. There was a nation-wide and world wide protest. A number of agitations had started. There were a number of reports in the newspapers and official media. When we analyse the issue of decreasing the percentage of the female population, we have to apply our mind to this also. We have to discuss the issue of female foeticide.

In India, female child has been considered as a burden on the future. People do not prefer to have a female child. They are being aborted illegally. The alarming reports show that female, male child ratio was around 927:1000 and the number is falling to 914:1000. It is again falling. This figure shows as to how the situation is deteriorating.

Though the Government has passed the Medical Termination Act, 1971 and the Pre-Diagnostic Act 1999 and 2002 which prohibits selective-sex abortion with the use of the advance technology, yet there are a number of clinics with a wider range of publicity where the female child is being aborted. This is also a big crime that our society is involved with.

India has passed a number of legislation to control violence and sexual crimes. Some of them are Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Pre-Diagnostic Act of 1999-2002, Domestic Violence Act of 2005 and much other legislation. When we see the total population, the contribution of women and children is 70.6 per cent in India. It means that a majority of the population belongs to this group. Out of the total work force, this strength is reflected. There is a dominant role of this group in asset creation of our country. I am sad to say, Madam, that this section is brutally exploited.

HON. CHAIRPERSON : There is no Madam in the Chair.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : I have said 'Madam' to the Minister and not to the Chair.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: You are supposed to address the Chair.

...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI P. K. SHREEMATHI TEACHER (KANNUR): It is very unfortunate that most of the honourable MPs in Treasury Benches had left. We are discussing a very important subject. It is a social issue. The Minister is there. We are very happy. But please look at the Treasury Benches only a few members. Shameful. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : Sir, it is sad that it is this section that is brutally exploited in spite of the many laws that the Parliament has passed. Involvement of politicians, involvement of police officers, involvement of administrative officers, even involvement of the judiciary is not exempted with regard to this case. A report says that 44 per cent of the victims are under the age of 18 years, 80 per cent are under 30, and about 2,37,868 victims are under the age of 12. It is a very sad state of affairs. And 60 per cent of the sexual assaults are not reported to police; 97 per cent of the culprits never spend a day in jail. Approximately two-thirds of the assaults are committed by the people who are known to the victims. That is another strange thing.

We have to apply our mind to the issue of children also. Where a child gets exploited is the place of child labour. Child domestic labour (CDL) is widely prevalent in India. CDL applies to children engaged in performing domestic tasks for a third party or employer and not family members. Child labour flourishes in both rural and urban India. Two decades after the nationwide ban on child labour in hazardous industries, about 12 million Indian children aged between five and 14 continue to work in dangerous occupations like construction sites, jewellery marketing, *beedi*, carpet weaving, brick making, fireworks, etc.

A major concern is that the Government is still not doing enough to provide alternative options for families which depend on the income of their children. We see that a family sends its children to work in order to get more income. Therefore, we have to think of providing alternative jobs to people. Children in the age group of five to 12 years should go to school. But they are going to work because they are being forced by their families to do so due to poverty. This social aspect also has to be taken into consideration. I urge that there should be a creative discussion on this and suggestions should come from all parts of the House.

In this regard, I would like to place some observations and suggestions before the House. There should be a massive social awareness campaign touching all sections of people directed against these criminal atrocities. We have passed a number of legislations but what we need now is speedy implementation. Justice delayed is equal to justice denied. Speedy action and timely action is what is most important.

Women should be promoted, elected and nominated to decision making forums so that they are empowered. They should be able to intervene in various issues. With regard to the issue of 33 per cent reservation for women, throughout India we have Panchayat Presidents, Block Presidents, and District Presidents who are women. If such a legislation had not been there, I am sure all those women would not have been able to reach such posts. So, I suggest that the Bill for 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament should be passed in this session itself. On behalf of my party I offer without any condition that we will support the Bill if the Government brings it before the House in this session itself.

I also suggest that women should be given 33 per cent reservation in the police force also. ...(*Interruptions*) There should be strict control on advertisements in the electronic media and also the movies which give misinformation to young people. Hence, a suitable legislation may be passed to check this. Since dowry deaths are increasing, stringent action must be taken and also appropriate campaign has to be made. Unauthorised clinics which promote sex determination of child and destroying female foetuses should be strongly handled.

There is a provision in the Act that redressal of grievances cells should be set up in all the establishments whether they are government offices or panchayats or work sites or industrial centres. There should be such redressal cells where women employees and workers are there. It is true that the State Government and departments concerned have to take the responsibility but in most of the States we are not able to see such arrangements by the State Governments. This has to be taken very seriously. How can women who are working in the Secretariats, NGOs or other places feel safe if they face difficulty? Where should they go? It is there in the Act passed by Parliament but it is not there in practice.

It is we in the Parliament who have passed this Act. So, when we pass such a legislation, we should be the model. There should be no exemption for us. Suppose we direct and ask that throughout India where woman employees are there, there should be redressal cells, in the purview of this Act, of course, Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha should also come. If there are some allegations or discussions with regard to Members, what is the mechanism with which we can resolve that issue? So, the Chair has to take the initiative. There should be such a mechanism in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. We should say that ours is the model. The Members of Parliament, that is Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, should be the model to give protection to our sisters, mothers and also our children. We are passing this law and we cannot be exempted. So, this issue has to be taken very seriously. I think, the Chair has to take the initiative to have such a set up.

With these words, I conclude.

SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY (GUWAHATI): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this very important subject. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. CHAIRPERSON : It is a very important issue. When an hon. Member is speaking, you have to listen first. Do not disturb when a lady Member is speaking. You please listen to her and then you raise it.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY : I think, the whole House should consider that it is a matter of shame that in the 21st century we are discussing about the protection of women. ...(*Interruptions*) Your party has been running this country for 60 years. Look at Gujarat; look at Madhya Pradesh. ...(*Interruptions*)

I will give you the details. In my State, Assam, which is ruled by the Congress, 9,311 women were killed in 2011, and 3,787 were kidnapped.

...(Interruptions) In my State, Assam, where the Congress rules, 1,707 women were raped and the crimes against women in 2011 were 11,500.
...(Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please take your seat. You can continue afterwards.

...(Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: The House stands adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. tomorrow.

18.00 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock

on Thursday, August 7, 2014 / Shravana 16, 1936 (Saka).

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