

[Sh. P. Chidambaram]

of reservation. This policy is intended to recognise that among SC/ST candidates there are candidates who are selected on their own merit and, hence, they should not preempt any of the vacancies reserved for the SC/ST communities. By this measure, it is expected that the number of candidates eventually selected will exceed the percentages of reservation. I am sure that the House will welcome this decision.

Finally, let me conclude by saying that we have lived for thousands of years with this scourge of discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Social discrimination against these groups of people continue in society today. It is our hope that one day all members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will enjoy such equality in education, opportunity and advancement that we can definitively place behind us the sad and heart-rending story of centuries of discrimination. Till that day comes, we in the Government are pledged to protective discrimination and to affirmative action in favour of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Thank you. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI B.D. PATIL (Kolaba): What about Mandal Commission.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: It is not the subject today.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

14.12 h. s.

ATROCITIES ON WOMEN

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now we shall take up discussion on the atrocities on women.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOW-

ALIA (Sangrur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw attention of this House towards atrocities being committed on women.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not find the Minister for Social Welfare here.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The Home Minister will take note of it. And, Sheilaji is also here.

(*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT): I am the one on whom atrocities are committed.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: She represents women and I represent atrocities.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOW-ALIA (Sangrur): Sister Sheilaji is such a nice lady that we cannot even think that the atrocities might be committed on her.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I consider myself to be fortunate to have an opportunity to raise such a serious matter in the House. It is a matter of great regret that atrocities are committed upon women in a country where mother Sita is worshipped and they talk of paying highest regards to women in the Mahabharata and where there have been many great women in this country, there has been Rani Jhansi who took part in struggle for freedom and where such noble ladies were born, who brought in a complete and radical change in India. In such a country it is a matter of great shame and regret that such things happen here. India is a country where Guru Nanak Dev said in Guru Granth Sahib:—

"Eas Kyon Manda Akhiyai, Jis Jame Rajaan."

why should this land of ours be called a barren land? Which has produced innumerable number of kings and great devotees? It is a matter of great shame that there have been the incidents of atrocities on women which are moreover on the increase. I would like to refer to the following in this connection:

[English]

In a written reply to a question of Mr. H.B. Patil, Shri P. Chidambaram said that the number of cases of rape were 7308 in 1986 and it has risen to 12036 in 1988.

[Translation]

Shri Chidambaram has stated in his statement that such incidents have increased. As I feel it, the atrocities committed on the women have been heart rending. It has been stated about Jahanabad in Bihar:

[English]

The raiders raped the women several times over at gun point. Those who tried to resist were beaten. After the heinous crime, the men looted cash and other belongings of the poor labourers. They went off firing in the air towards bigha village. The guard of the kiln Hardev Yadav of Mustichak who attempted to check the gangsters was killed.

[Translation]

Such is the position there that even the D.I.G. and the police did not help, though the Government has got immense power of law given to them by the people and there are Lady Ministers in the Government itself and lady members are there even in the legislatures and a number of women officers in the administration and we are known for guarding the honour of womenfolk all over the world. We have respect for the ladies and we stand for it. In spite of that such atrocities are being committed on women in this country. What can be more shameful and unfortunate than these things here. We bow our heads in reverence to the women in India. What is

their role here in this country? When she is mere a child, she prays for her brother, in her youth she prays for her husband and when she has attained motherhood, she sacrifices her body to keep the humanity alive. In spite of this, I would like to make a mention of this period of injustice and atrocities through which we are passing and where undue advantage is being taken of the weakness and poverty of our women folk in the name of dowry.

[English]

75% of the crime against women are committed by the police and anti-social elements. They are protected even by the political forces.

[Translation]

All these things, I would like to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister. Politicians protect those people who commit atrocities on women. This is against the traditions, prestige and accepted norms of morality of our country. Atrocities are committed on the ladies. There are incidents of their murders and illegal detention and also the cases of rape on women who are sexually exploited and face physical harassment. Not only this, even the cases of atrocities on expectant and nursing mothers are there in our country. I would mention it here in the House that the ladies are put to humiliation through different advertisements which are definitely against the accepted practices and prestige of female. Whether we, the people of this country, will allow undesirable display of the female body for the purpose of increasing the sale of a soap or some oil, or to promote business activities or for our profiteering object which is against the prestige of our country and the human-values held in high esteem in this country. Hence there is need to pay attention to it. It is everywhere that the ladies engaged in small jobs are being exploited. I take 'sati' system as the barbaric murder of women. Such criminal tendencies like 'sati' should not find a place in the noble traditions of our great country. That was the creation of a few exploiters who had their

[*Sh. Balwant Singh Ramoowalia*]

hold on the society. They made it binding on the widowed young wife of a man to take a plunge into fire bedecked all over her body in ornaments and with a suhaag mark on her forehead. They must have thought that having taken a plunge into fire, the girl would turn into ashes and they would collect all the gold from her ashes. That is also a form of looting. Government should pay attention to it.

[*English*]

Dowry deaths which were reported to police had risen from 999 in 1985 to 1787 in 1987.

[*Translation*]

There have been the cases of dowry deaths in Gujarat. Though this House, I would like to tell the whole country that the women belonging not only to poor classes but also to the rich families have died on account of dowry.

SHRI VIR SEN (Khurja): It is the rich people who kill them. The poor people do not kill them.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: It is correct.

[*English*]

Mr. D.P. Sena of Gorakpur University said that dowry system is not an ancient practice in India. But the increasing incidence of dowry disputes, leading to domestic violence and deaths of women has comparatively risen in urban middle and lower middle class phenomenon. Another important factor is that dowry victims were, generally, found in tradition-ridden high-caste families, which observed the pattern of marriage within the caste and overwhelming majority of the dowry deaths that is, 60% were in Brahmins; 20% in Vaishnava Community; 20% in Kshatriyas and 0% in Scheduled Castes.

[*Translation*]

Sir, that is the position. I would like to say one

thing more. Mr. J. Vergeese of Kerala University has conducted a study in this regard on the basis of which he has claimed that

[*English*]

I.A.S. and Central Services Officials, Doctors and Chartered Accountants fetch the highest price in the matrimonial market.

[*Translation*]

This is the factual position.

SHRIMATI BIBHA GHOSH GOSWAMI (Nabadwip): This is the position only in respect of Government employment. It is not so at other places.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: I would like to mention that these people despite their occupying very high positions in the Government drawing the highest amount of salaries, are priced highest even in the marriage market. They also command highest respect in the society because of their power wielding positions. That is the position. There is a famous female singer in our area named Narindra Bibi whose daughter was burnt to death by her son-in-law who was an M.B.B.S. and the girl was also an M.B.B.S. but in spite of all these facts, she was burnt to death. Hence it is a matter of serious consideration by us as to how to get the women have their due rights in the prevailing circumstances.

[*English*]

The Union Home Ministry has issued a number of circulars regarding rise in crimes against women. Unfortunately, laws and circulars by themselves cannot solve the problem.

[*Translation*]

As at present, there are a number of laws to that effect and orders are also issued from time to time in this connection. It is, therefore, a matter of serious concern for us and we should find out the reasons for which the problem is not being solved. What is the present position of women in our society?

The basic thing which comes to my mind is the attitude of the criminals who are not afraid to commit such crimes against or atrocities on women. I would like to place all those reasons before this august House. Till date not a single ruffian involved in molesting hundreds of girls in St. Stephens and Hindu College of Delhi on the occasion of Holi festival in 1988 has been punished. Same thing had happened during Delhi riots. Has anybody been punished? Women are the worst victims whenever riots break out in any part of the country. In riots of November 1984 in Delhi, nearly 2200 Sikh women became widow, but till date nothing has been done for them except the 200 widows rehabilitated. Nobody took an initiative for them. The Punjab police is committing atrocities on women as is reported by the newspapers daily on the charge of giving shelter to terrorists. Can the sleeping women confronted by terrorists armed with A.K. 47 Rifles on the farms at night refuse to cook food for them. In view of all these things the Government should be rational. The condition of women in the age group 18 to 25 years is the worst. Nearly 80 percent dowry deaths are reported in respect of this age group and rest 20 per cent from the women in the age group up to 35 years. A very good thing has come to my notice that there is no incident of dowry death in case of intercaste marriages. For rooting out this evil, to my mind, intercaste marriages should be encouraged. I would like to state one more thing. It is also the responsibility of society to safeguard the rights of illiterate poor women of the rural areas as well as those of the urban areas, besides ensuring the security of a few English speaking highly educated women and those in the top ranking positions.

Sir, in this connection I would like to give 5 or 6 suggestions. My first suggestion is for the setting up of an independent authority to inquire into all type of cases of atrocities against women and cases of dowry deaths to file cases in the courts and arrest the persons found guilty therefor. Police, the prosecution authority should be independent and vested with all the powers required for the purpose and there should be sum-

mary trial in special courts in the cases of rape, molestation and dowry deaths. Secondly many persons take recourse to the change of their religion to humiliate their present wives and to marry for the second time after their conversion as a muslim. There have been many such cases where people changed their religion only to marry for a second time.

[English]

While a second marriage is not considered an offence under the Muslim Personal Law, a marriage by conversion should not be held valid in a court of law, unless a husband has divorced his first wife. No less a person like the Shahi Imam of the Jamma Masjid of Delhi has stated that he would not convert a Hindu to Islam if his purpose in becoming a Muslim is to marry again.

[Translation]

Most of these cases are reported from the educated class. Easy method evolved for second marriage is the conversion.

My third suggestion is to file damages suit of Rs. 5 lakh to 10 lakh against the persons committing atrocities on women to help the victims along with the imposition of heavy penalty on such persons. The Government is requested to refer to the guidelines issued by the Chief Justice of the Punjab High Court to the lower courts to give punishment in addition to the imposition of heavy fines on the accused and out of the heavy fines so collected, larger part of the amount should go to the victims.

Here I may ask the Government to cite the name of even a single officer who was awarded for his commendable work and initiating action in the cases of atrocities against women and dowry deaths in his district, area, tehsil or subdivision adding a grace to the name of that place where he was posted or to cite an instance of rescuing a person from the clutches of atrocities. But till this day no such award has been given. Contrary to that the officers whosoever to

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steps against the persons committing atrocities on women were transferred before the completion of their term. Therefore as a fourth suggestion I would like to request the Government to evolve a mechanism for appreciating and rewarding the officers for the valour they show in taking action in such cases. The Government should give incentive to such persons.

As regards the cases of dowry deaths, I would like to say that if a girl after her marriage writes a letter complaining of the demands of dowry by the in-laws, the Police Officer incharge of the respective Police Station should open a file for the purpose of record immediately after receiving the very first letter from the girl in that regard. As the in laws demand dowry in the first instance and then they continue to demand some thing or the other and last of all, these things culminate into the death of the girl. Therefore, in cases of dowry deaths, the police should maintain the number and date wise record of the complaints to present the same in the court as a proof. Under the terrorists Act, all the family members on the in laws side above 18 years of age should be convicted for harbouring the criminals responsible for killing the daughter-in-law. For checking dowry deaths, the family members should be convicted up to 3 years of imprisonment for being a party to the killing of the daughter-in-law by the mother-in-law. With these words I conclude.

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Jadavpur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to congratulate Shri Ramoowalia who has raised this discussion in this august House.

We are proud of our Indian women who have played a great role throughout our past history. If you go through the early Indian history, we will find that Indian women like Sita, Savitri, Damyanti, Khana Leelawati, Sati Arundati and others left a mark behind.

If you see the medieval history, ladies like Jahanara Begam, Roshanara Begam, Nurjahan Begam and other eminent ladies played a great role. In our present day history, you will find that Kamla Nehru, Basanti Devi, Matangni Hazra and Indira Gandhi played a great role. We are very proud of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, late Prime Minister of India, who lost her life for the sake of the country.

Sir, women in India constitute the single largest group of backward citizens. It is a fact that atrocities on women are increasing day by day. Sometimes, it may be because of dowry, sometimes molestation, sometimes rape and sometimes other atrocities. Our Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi has been trying his best to uplift the women. He feels strongly about the rights of women. He has also said that our march into the 21st century would be seriously undermined if women are left behind.

What do we find in reality today? It is a fact that the lives of those women who are involved in political life are not safe. I know that from my experience being in the political field myself. The life of those women who are in the administration is not safe. I am not blaming the lower, the middle class or the illiterate people, but the fact is that the atrocities on women are coming from the rich and from the educated people, from the administration, and from the high officials. I, therefore, strongly condemn those who exploit the women. That needs to be put an end to immediately.

As the time is limited, I would not elaborate on the points that have already been touched upon by Shri Ramoowalia.

The hon. Minister, Shrimati Margaret Alva, is aware that in the last session also in this House, we had raised the issue of murder of Supriya, grand daughter-in-law, at the residence of one Chief Minister. Why I am telling this is because these things happen even in such responsible quarters. It is not a matter of opposition or the ruling party. Sir, I fight for the genuine cause. Dr. Phulrattu

Guha is a senior Member of the Parliament. She is an ex-Central minister also. She had one major accident and when she went to the hospital, she was not allowed to enter into the hospital. If it is not atrocity, it is injustice which is equivalent to atrocity.

Regarding Ms. Jayalalitha also, you know how she was humiliated and assaulted inside the legislature. You know the circumstances under which the resignation letter of the leader of the Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly was unauthoritatively and illegally seized by the Police under the instructions of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister. After that the police denied the fact and the Police Commissioner said that this was—the zerox copy and they did not get the true copy. Sir, I have this document and I can lay it on the Table of the House after my speech. This is a genuine document. This is a document from the Police Mahajan. The police has written: "A blue letter pad in a sealed cover addressed to the Speaker was found. When it was opened a letter written by Ms. Jayalalitha, MLA dated 15.3.89 was found." This is the letter and if you want I can lay it on the Table of the House. I can challenge that if my grievance is not genuine, then anybody can bring a privilege motion against me. I would request the Minister to suspend this Police Commissioner. I would like to know as to why the Police Commissioner told like that. This is the document which I have got from the Police file. When I got it from there, how can he say that he only received a zerox copy? So, my request is that you should suspend him. I would say that the police is on the back of these atrocities.

Madam, I have a newspaper with me. It is not Hindustan Times or National Herald or Times of India or the Statement but it is the Indian Express. They have published the photographs of Ms. Jayalalitha. How she was humiliated inside the Assembly. I am not raising this issue for any political reason. I am raising it because Madam, as you know, sari is an ornament of a woman. In our Bangla we say, 'Shri Nari Abhushan', i.e. sari is an ornament of a woman. But how did the

PWD Minister... (*Interruptions*)

How allegedly he tore her sari... (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please order, order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Sir, is it the forum to raise this point?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please order, order. Take your seat.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Sir, maybe she is an actress, but she is a public representative and no Minister can humiliate her like this. Every woman in this country has her respect. A Minister is a responsible person and he just cannot tear sari of a lady. The PWD Minister roughed her up. It is not a party matter. I agree that the Chief Minister never agreed with it but he did not even take my action in this regard. She is a politician and if her life is not safe and if she is not allowed to attend the Assembly, then what would be the position for other women. If an AIADMK Leader, who is a lady, is not allowed to attend the House, where is the question of protection to other women. We have discussed atrocities on women in this house several times.

Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister, who is also a woman, to conduct an inquiry regarding assault on the AIADMK leader. You should take proper action so that not only Miss Jayalalitha but also women like Shrimati Goswami, Mrs. Guha and others are protected. Therefore, I would urge upon the hon. Minister to see that the honour and life of every women of this country should be protected. Secondly, I want to raise another very important issue. We have got the Dowry Prohibition Act. It was amended in 1984 and also in 1986 in order to make it more stringent. The Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and also the Indian Evidence Act were amended to deal effectively not only with the dowry deaths but also to deal effectively with cruelty on women. It is a fact that this august House has passed so many laws

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but there is no proper implementation of those laws. The fact is that mostly the atrocities on women are committed by the high class families, the family of judges, the politicians' family and so on. Because of their influence, the people are not getting justice. Therefore, I would say, "Good money-good law, good money-good justice and good money-good barrister." That is why, these things are going on.

One Swedish woman came to Calcutta. She was raped by two BSF Jawans. In a village in Bihar, the police people have gang raped the woman. I do not know why such things are going on. In Assam also, the Bodo Agitation has started. You know how the police are torturing the women. Even there the lives of women are not safe. So, this is the position. I would request the hon. Minister to see that proper justice is given to the women of the country. Wherever proper justice is not given, the Government should come forward and see that they get proper justice.

Now I want to cite one particular case. One lady by name Mrs. Soma Chatterjee was married on 5.12.88. After four months of her marriage, I received a letter from her father that she was murdered. She was married in Allahabad. The police says that according to postmortem report, she has committed suicide. But when her father pressurised that it was not a suicide case but it was a murder case; then, the second postmortem of the body took place. Then it was made clear that that was a murder case. Now what happened? It came to the notice that her husband had murdered her. His name was Shri Ram Chatterjee. After four days, due to influence of his maternal uncle who may be a judge, he got a bail from the Court. So, what I want to say is that this young woman was murdered only after four months of her marriage. She was only 20 years old. What I want to bring to your notice is that if anywhere the relative of the victim is a judge or the police or for that matter if the Government is involved, then people won't get proper justice.

I would request the hon. Minister to introduce a forum where the Government of India can directly investigate the case, where the Government of India can directly intervene or where the Government of India can take action against such people. You have got the Dowry Prohibition Act wherein it is mentioned that if any woman is killed within seven years of marriage, the Government can punish the in-laws.

There is a law but it is not implemented properly.

I had mentioned this case of Rajasthan Congress MLA last year also. One Congress MLA killed his four children, four daughter because of infanticide. This man should be expelled from the Party. I am not saying about Congress or Communist, but this is a matter of concern. Madam, you can see that report, being an MLA he should be a responsible person. You see the report that it is confirmed, "Infanticide by Rajasthan MLA's family". What is this?

(Interruptions)

Why are you laughing? This is a serious matter.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is a serious matter.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): Because it is female infanticide they are laughing.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if anybody laughs when Kumari Mamata Banerjee is speaking it will also tantamount to atrocities on woman..... (Interruptions)

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: If this is their attitude here then what can we expect from the opposition? What can we expect? If

their behavior is like this, in this august House, what will they do outside, I do not know. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI SYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN (Murshidabad): I appreciate their sentiments. But whatever has happened in Tamil Nadu Assembly, cannot be discussed here in Parliament..... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order, order.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU (Gobichettipalayam): Even the Assembly is not safe for women. (*Interruptions*)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Women are not safe because of the Opposition people. (*Interruptions*)

Madam, you see the Rajasthan MLA's case. Please do not disturb. This is not your matter. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mamataji, you address the Chair.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: They are not having any specific case. But I am having a very specific case here. So, I am giving the specific documents. If you are ready you can see. The police confirmed infanticide by a Rajasthan MLA's family. As the Police have confirmed it action should be taken.

My party always protects the rights of minorities, and my party always protects the rights of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and my party always protects the rights of women. We should take proper action against him. I would request that the Party may expel this member. This type of member should not continue as a Congress (I) member.

I do not want to speak anything more, but I want to give some specific suggestions.

I want to point out about Shri Khilanand Jha. He was working in Bihar; he married a Harijan lady. The Government said that if an upper caste man marries a lower caste lady, he would get some credit. After that he married her. What is the harm? We welcome it. But after he married this Harijan lady, he was dismissed. That is very bad. I would like to request that his services should be restored or he should be reinstated immediately.

I would also like to request you to see that proper implementation of laws takes place in our country. Secondly, proper publicity through the media should be given. Because TV and Radio are popular media they should be used to give publicity. The Press also is doing very well. But there should be a constant endeavour to strengthen these media.

Thirdly, to create consciousness among the women we have to eradicate illiteracy in women.

I suggest that a lady Police Officer should be appointed in every district to look after the grievances of women.

Our Government is setting up so many committees like the Parliamentary Committee for the Welfare of the Scheduled Castes, and other committees also. I would like to request you to set up a Parliamentary Committee for Women, to look after the women and to look into the grievances of women. Women are also minorities now. Somebody may be treating women as a weaker section, though we are not weak. We do not even want any undue advantage from men. Sometimes people say that women are the poor class, they are the neglected class. But I think that as a woman I am proud. We do not want any help from men. But we want equal opportunities to work with men in the field. I do not discriminate between men and women. We are equals, we are the same people. We should have equal rights, we should have equal opportunities. We want to work together in the field. But there should not be any discrimination between men and women in this country. If this discrimination

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goes on, then our country will not improve. We are going towards the 21st century, we are looking forward to the 21st century. But if our attitude does not change, this country will not survive; and that is why I also believe sometimes that women are also responsible for this situation—some women; I am not speaking about all women, but some women. That is why I believe that it is the women who have to come forward to solve these problems; and they have to take part from the grassroots level to the decision-making levels, to solve their problems.

SHRIMATI BIBHA GHOSH GOSWAMI (Nabadwip): Sir, I would first entreat you not to ring the bell, because I would be as brief as possible, and I will not take much time.

I am glad that this issue has come to Parliament, because we rarely get a chance to talk about women's issues. But discussion alone is never enough. More important is action and implementation of the laws, and the consensus arrived at in this House. Therefore, Government seems to be very long on rhetoric, and very short on actual implementation at the ground level. In fact, non-implementation of existing laws, however inadequate they may be, is a reflection of the lack of political will on the part of this Government.

Take the case of Delhi. This is the capital of India, the citadel of the ruling party, the place where our Prime Minister lives. Why is it that right here in Delhi, we have by far the largest number of cases of eve-teasing, and one of the highest number of cases of dowry deaths? It has got a small population. But in 1986, according to Government statistics, there were 64 dowry deaths; in 1987, 79 dowry deaths and in 1988, 84 dowry deaths. Despite its small population compared to other States, the cases of kidnapping of women, rape and molestation were also abnormally high. Why is it that one hardly sees women in Connaught Circus after 8 p.m.? Very few women would dare to board a bus alone at night, or go to the

cinema show at night. If the Government has failed to provide security to women in this capital itself, then how can we take seriously all the things that are said from the Treasury benches regarding uplift of women, regarding how they will not leave us women behind while going to the 21st century and regarding that wonderful piece of high-sounding nothing which is called NPP—National Perspective Plan for Women?

One might legitimately ask how much of this talk is sincere and how much is merely populist propaganda during an election year. Even according to Government statistics, crimes against women have registered a sharp increase in all aspects, both within and outside the family. These include dowry murders, widow-burning, rape, wife-beating, female foeticide and infanticide, witch-hunting, virginity test, Devadasi system, prostitution, increasing desertion etc.

I have got the figures that are available here. I refer to Unstarred Question No. 4434 dated 3.4.1989.

15.00 hrs.

Now, I am not going into the statistics, I am taking them for granted because it will take more time. If we take a close look at the statistics on various types of atrocities on women for different States, we find that such atrocities tend to be highest in five States of the country, all of which share some common features. I am not shielding the other States because this malady is pervading in all the States all over the country. These five States are Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

Is this an accident that all these five States also figure at the top when we look at the figures released by the Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes regarding atrocities on scheduled castes and tribes? These five States together account for 85-90 per cent of such atrocities in the whole country? Is this also an accident that, barring Maharashtra, the other four States which are in the Centre, that is North-

ern Hindi belt, are also among the most backward in terms of a wide range of social and economic indicators? Are these also not the States where female literacy is the lowest, infant mortality is the highest, and female infanticide is so high that it would put even the most shameless male chauvinist to shame? These are not accidents. This is not a mere coincidence that in these very States the performance of the State Governments in the field of land reform has been the poorest. We still hear about landlords with thousands of acres of land—which, of course, are kept illegally with the full knowledge of the authorities, who would not dare to touch them? We hear about private senas to terrorise their tenants and agricultural labourers, and to suppress them when they demand implementation of their legal rights. We hear of mass murders and gang rapes repeatedly from these States. What we saw in Deorala, that is widow burning, or the gang rape at Pararia in Bihar are expressions of decadent semi-feudal culture of the sixteenth century. Now very little has been done so far to rectify these abuses by the ruling party and their Government as they depend on the patronage of the very same people who perpetrate such crimes. Is it an accident that all these five States plus Delhi are ruled by Congress? May I ask what measures the C.Ms or M.Ps from these places have taken to put a stop to these practices? Why are the rapists of Pararia still at large? Why is it that immediately after the ousting of the Left Front Government in Tripura, gang rape by military occurred on tribal women in Ujan Maidan and other places? Why is it that the offenders in most cases are either men of the landlords or the custodians of law and order themselves—police and military? As I have mentioned on an earlier occasion, rape by custodians of law is not an aberration but has become an instrument of class or political vendetta and it has been possible because Government lacks the political will to punish the culprits. If the Governments is unable to control its own men, what guarantee is there that the police personnel would maintain necessary vigil against such atrocities?

What action has been taken against

Mohan Lal Pawar, ASI living in Model Town, Police Lines, here in Delhi who beat his wife Geetanjali so that both her hands were fractured? The Kingsway Camp Police Station refused to record her complaint and only after the Janabadi Mahila Samiti staged a mass demonstration of women that they took some action. But whether the action was only for show or for real remains to be seen.

Now I come to the case of the Rajasthan MLA about whom Kumari Mamata Banerjee has already mentioned. She has also referred to the reports in the Press. It is said:

"The MLA himself was charged with killing two of his newborn daughters, including one who was born after his election to the Vidhan Sabha in 1986."

What action has been taken against him? Why has he not been put behind the bars and convicted of murder? Now, according to the reports the Chief Minister is backing him all along.

Now, with your permission, I would refer to the remarks of a senior Minister of the Government of India, which puts the question of credibility of this Government in question. I am talking about Shri Vasant Sathe. We are used to all kinds of statements coming from this gentleman. But his one exceeds all limits. The reports says, I quote from *the Statesman* of 21-2-1989,

"He told a shocked audience in Nagpur that there was nothing wrong with sex determination tests, and compared them with abortion which is now legal and enjoys a degree of social sanction. The Union Energy Minister went on to add that since the sex determination test was carried out to ascertain whether the foetus was of an unwanted female, it amounted to aborting a child that is not wanted... Mr. Sathe went on to argue that if men outnumbered women, the "latter would be in demand and offered dowry". In other words, organized female foeticide would

[Smt. Bibha Ghosh Goswami]

change the existing man: woman ratio and promote the concept of bride price."

Now, if this is the argument, why not kill half the women and thereby further increase the demand for the remaining half in the country?

I would request the Prime Minister to clarify whether this is indeed the view of the Government or not. If not, Shri Sathe must resign from the Ministry and from Parliament. The ruling party and the Government at the Centre and in the States are squarely responsible for the present escalation of atrocities on women in this country. Atrocities on? Women have become an integral part of atrocities on the downtrodden masses of people.

The ruling party and its Government have failed to carry out land reforms, free and compulsory education, especially education for women. They have refused to enshrine right to work as a Fundamental Right in the Constitution, thereby denying women the most important factor in raising their status which is economic independence. Their economic policy is throwing thousands of women out of job thereby rendering them totally and utterly helpless and prey to atrocities. Their policy of compromise with all sorts of fundamentalists, communalist, revivalist and obscurantist forces is responsible for a sharp increase of crime against women in the name of religion. They cannot take action against the landlords and their men as these are their 'vote banks' and they are responsible for the continuance of the semi-feudal values and culture which deny equal rights to women and see them as beasts of burden and objects of lust.

How are their media depicting the women? In conclusion, I say that, in order to fight the atrocities on women, women have to fight the Congress (I) policies and Government. The status of women cannot be restored or raised by this Government or along with this Government. It can be restored only

by fighting against this regime, fighting it out of power and our only hope is in the unprecedented awakening of democratic forces including women in this country to attain that immediate goal.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): Sir, if the hon. Member has tried to observe that there have never been any atrocities on women in Bengal, I can give the statistics. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order. Do not waste the time of the House. We are having hardly one hour.

Shri Brajamohan Mohanty.

SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY (Puri): Sir, at the outset, I am constrained to observe that the cause of women is not only sacred to women but it is sacred to all the people of the country. I am sorry to say that political partisan spirit has been introduced into the movement, which is very much harmful for the ultimate success of the women movement.

On 13th March, 1989, in reply to the question, whether the offences/atrocities on women have increased, the Minister replied 'Yes'. The Minister has said that dowry deaths, rape cases, molestation of women/girls, abduction of girls/women, and kidnapping of minor girls have increased. Further the Minister observed that the increase in population and rapid changes in socio-economic conditions are mainly major reasons for the increase. The increase in population means increase of women also. Why does it affect adversely the women? And why is it that rapid changes in socio-economic conditions adversely affect the women? My submission would be, let it be examined in depth as to why such adverse effects are taking place.

I would like to submit one thing about West Bengal because my hon. friend from CPM said that if the Congress Government goes out of power, there will be no women problem in the country (*Interruptions*) I do not know why the leadership of her party has put these things through her. She is nice and uncontroversial.

Sir, in West Bengal, Women's Grievances Redressal Cell, South 24-Parganas has been set up in the year 1987. The Cell primarily deals with the offences against women in South 24-Parganas District. It has recorded 185 rape cases during the past three years. If in one district there could be 185 rape cases during the past three years, then what will be the state of affairs of the rest Districts. Only twenty per cent of the rape cases are being reported to the police station and the rest are not reported to the police station. That is the figure. With that background, the dimension of the problem we can imagine..... (*Interruptions*)

Now I tell the House about a case of rape. Justice Krishna Iyer has observed that from top to bottom the judges are not sympathetic in handling cases involving women causes. I am placing before the House Suman Rani case i.e. a rape case. The High Court gave the punishment of ten years but in the Supreme Court it was reduced to 5 years because of her past history. So far as past history of the lady who has been raped is concerned, it is not a material consideration. The material consideration is that she had been raped without her consent. Will the hon. Minister consider examining the statute so that judicial discretion is not exercised in favour of the culprit?

Now I come to the international dimension. In Malaysia, a very stringent law against rape was debated in Parliament. But unfortunately MPs there talked loosely. They said that if women dress decently, there would be no rape case. Revealing clothes and sexy walks are invitation. This is unfortunate. Mrs. Irina Fernandes, President of All Women Action Committee said that they were disgusted by their behaviour. Male chauvinism

reflects thereby. I do not say that this is the order of the life. Women may not be decently dressed. But what about men? Somebody said that widows can commit sati voluntarily. But what about men? If the wife dies, is husband supposed to commit sati?

It is a very complicated dimension of the problem. Recently an analysis in Soviet Union showed that out of 100 cases of marriage, 56 cases ended in divorce. This is the reason why juvenile delinquency is increasing. They are now thinking of glorification of marriages and glorification of parentage because that would be the ultimate solution of the problem. In Hungary now competition is going on in the name of 'best breast of Budapest'. This is degradation of culture particularly in a communist country. Recently in an Id prayer in Peshawar in Pakistan, the kazi bemoaned that the Head of the State of the Islamic State is a woman. So, this problem is there all over the world. Recently one lady Harris Barbara was elected as a Bishop of the Anglican Church and all over the Christian world there has been a lot of protest against that. So, this problem has got international dimensions and we have to fight against it. We should build up women consciousness, we should build up women awakening all over the country so that we can fight it out. It is not a party programme, it is a national programme and all parties should be committed to it, and I believe, as Indians we are committed to it.

So far as the figure of unemployment is concerned, comparatively women are more in number. So far as the discrimination in wages is concerned, the women are suffering from that. There has been a recommendation for amending the Inheritance Law, particularly with regard to Hindus. Same is the case with Marriage Laws. So, we have to do something to see that women are brought at par with men. Unless we do that, we cannot achieve the results.

I am very happy that the Prime Minister is taking personal interest to see that women are brought at par with men and he is trying his level best for that. But ultimately it is the women who have to fight for their own cause.

[Sh. Braja Mohan Mohanty]

So, they must unite and fight against it. We have even amended the Constitution also. In the Chapter on Fundamental Duties, we have said that we shall not indulge in practices derogatory to the dignity of women. So, for that we have amended the Constitution itself. But all the same, there must be women consciousness and they must have the strength and unity to fight for their own cause. The Government should take adequate steps for their economic independence, for improving their social status and for giving them political representation. Then only we can go some steps ahead. With these words, I conclude. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

*SHRI K. RAMACHANDRA REDDY (Hindupur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I congratulate Shri Balwant Singh Ramoowalia for raising a discussion on the atrocities on women in the House. One of the Manus said long long ago that 'women do not deserve freedom'. But it is a saying of the past now. This dictum does not apply to the modern day society. It is redundant and rejected outright. Now women are competing with men in all spheres. Many of them are now highly educated. Women are enjoying equal positions in various walks of life. In legislatures, and other fora, administrative Offices, be it any sphere or walk of life, they are there and proving their mettle. But, Sir, unfortunately, like men. This advancement of women is limited to only a privileged few. Still majority of the women are very backward. The atrocities are being committed mostly on the women who still remain backward. It is very unfortunate. Atrocities are being committed on women day in and day out. We come across many dowry deaths every day. A civilised society hangs its head down in shame for these atrocities. Even in those days when it was said that a women does not deserve freedom, no dowry death had taken place. Sir, this country enjoys a glorious past. Civilization touched its zenith on this sacred soil. We were in the forefront of all the civilized nations on the earth from time

immemorial. Today, we feel proud of the past, and claim that we are a very highly advanced society. We feel proud of our achievements. But, alas, along with our advancement the civil practices like dowry deaths are on the constant increase. Shrimati Indira Gandhi rules the country some time ago. Now here son is in the saddle. Dowry deaths are on the increase even since they started ruling the country. We claim ourselves to be a civilised society. But are we behaving in such a dignified way so as to do justice to our claim. Or are we behaving in a monstrous and barbaric way quite contrary to our claim? To what an extent the Government is responsible for such atrocities? How is that the Government has failed in controlling those atrocities. On self intraspection, it will become clear that the failure of administrative machinery is mainly responsible for the growing atrocities on women. They have a tendency to look down upon women. They do not treat the women the way they ought to.

Sir, one of the main reasons for the dowry deaths is the economic dependence of women. Women do not enjoy economic freedom. Women are denied inheritance rights in their parents property. If a father has three sons the property will be divided into four parts and each one gets 1/4 of the property. Of his 1/4 share, father gives, if he desires, some share to his daughters. Hence, 2/3 it is clear how an woman is deprived of her right over property. It is this absence of the right to property to right, which is making the women remain economically dependent. Since they are economically not independent, they remain weak and atrocities on them take place more and more. Atleast now, when we are claim that we are marching ahead and are about to enter 21st century, should try to confer property rights on women. A man and an woman should enjoy equal rights over property. If this is done, atrocities on women would come down automatically. Hence I request the Government to take measures to confer equal rights to property for men and women through a legislation. I am proud to say that, the Andhra Pradesh Government has already provided

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Telugu.

such a right by passing a bill four years ago. After much dilly dallying consent was given by the President to that Bill very recently. The step of Government of Andhra Pradesh should serve as a model to the entire country, and the persons who are at the helm in the centre should emulate Andhra example by conferring equal right to property on women.

Though the women were denied freedom, they were held in high esteem during the past. Both Indian and Greek epics reflect the status of women during those days. Homer in his epic "Odessey" says "the beauty of the women that launch thousand ships into war". This shows how much they adored the women in those days. In Mahabharatha, 18 akshowhinis of soldiers had to fight a war. The reason, the humiliation of a woman. Ravana and his Rakshasa clan had to pay penalty for ill-treating Seetha. Such instances are too many to quote. These innumerable instances show what a pride of place a woman occupied in those good old days. Women enjoyed great respect even in those days when the society was not that much advanced as it is today. Lord Krishna could not kill demon Naraka. His consort Satya who had followed her husband to the battle ground, comes to the rescue of Krishna by killing Narakasma. Lord Krishna appreciating her mastery over the art of war and wonders whether there is any art or skill which is beyond the comprehension of a woman. If it is taught to her in nice way. It is amply clear that there is no sphere of activity which is beyond the capability of a woman. I wonder where that glory of the woman has gone today? On one hand we find a woman handling every kind of profession, be it a typist or an administrator or an able orator, on the other hand we find the women who are gullible and subjected to all sorts of atrocities. Sati was in vogue centuries ago; An attempt is being made to revive this practice. But it is surprising that Sati is getting enough encouragement in Congress ruled Rajasthan. Much publicity is being given there for Sati. Sati is an evil practice and should be condemned by one and all. It is a slur on a civilised society like ours.

Strongly, the Central Government has remained as a silent spectator. In fact it is not in a position to take a definite stand. The reason is that Rajasthan is under Congress rule. Had it been an N.T.R. Government or Jyoti Basu's Government, it would have been dismissed immediately. This kind of double standard would only contribute to growing instances of atrocities. Wherever and whenever the Sati takes place, the concerned persons and states should be punished severely. If the Centre remains indifferent if this practice takes place in Congress ruled States, then the action of the Central Government deserves to be condemned. I am ashamed to see the helplessness displayed by the Central Government in this respect. It is not merely sufficient to say that atrocities on women are being committed. We have to work resolutely in order to see that these atrocities come to an end. These atrocities are more in Congress-ruled States like Rajasthan, U.P. and Bihar. There are several legislations already which ban the evil practices. Yet, they are not being implemented in letter and spirit. Who is responsible for the failure in implementation? Atrocities are more in Congress ruled states than in Opposition ruled States. The Congress Party claims that it is taking the country to 21st Century. Quite contrary to it we find the barbarian practices being committed in their own States. There is no use in saying that the 21st Century is being ushered in as long as such evil practices like Sati continue to exist. They should stop shedding crocodile tears. If Government is really interested in the upliftment of women then the women have to be given the right to property on par with men. Then only the imbalance between man and woman can be removed. When women become economically independent, naturally the atrocities on them will diminish and the country can surge ahead into the 21st Century.

Once again I thank and congratulate Shri Ramoowalia for raising this discussion in the House.

I conclude my speech thanking you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, Dr. Rajhans may speak. But before he speaks, I would like to state that we started this discussion around 2.15 p.m. instead of 2 p.m. Therefore, to that extent we will continue the debate up to 4.15 p.m. Afterwards we are going to take up discussion on drinking water problem at 4.15 p.m. Madam intervenes at 3.00 p.m.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): I need only 15 minutes.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Then you start at 3.45 p.m. because afterwards one Member will be left.

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV: What about us?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will call you. It is only intervention. We will continue afterwards. We will take it up again on Monday.

Now, Dr. Rajhans may speak.

[Translation]

DR. G.S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the seriousness of the hon. Members on such a serious issue of atrocities against women is reflected by the attendance in the House.

Really it is sad to discuss the issue of atrocities against women every year in the House. After having a discussion in the House the hon. Members feel satisfied and think that they have done their duty and thereafter there will be no incident of atrocities on women. My friends in the opposition got very annoyed when an hon. Member of the ruling party raised the issue of Ms. Jayalalitha. I

would like to know why the issue of Ms. Jayalalitha cannot be raised here in the House. Has she not been meted out an injustice? Mere this fact that she is an actress does not permit us to put her to humiliation just by tearing her clothes.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH RATH: The ex-Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was an actor so also is the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. G.S. RAJHANS: What I mean to say is that Ms. Jayalalitha incident which took place in Tamil Nadu is a sad reflection on the country as a whole and especially on the ruling party in Tamil Nadu. My colleague showed the Indian Express with pictures of Ms. Jayalalitha in tattered clothes, the newspaper which is often quoted in the House is not any other newspaper but the Indian Express. What happened to Ms. Jayalalitha is known to whole of the country. To inform her party, family members and public, she expressed on a piece of paper her desire to quit. But later she handed over the sealed envelope to a family friend..... ** for safe custody. The Intelligence Officer of the D.M.K. came to know about it and he arrested ** After arrest the officer manhandled the person at his residence and asked him to produce the letter. Having received the letter he handed it over to the Assistance Commissioner of Police who in turn handed it over to the Police Commissioner. The Police Commissioner sent it to the Home Secretary who further handed it to the Chief Minister and he declared that Kumari Jayalalitha has resigned. This is extremely regretting.

I quote here from the magazine "The Week", which is not a Government magazine but a very reputed magazine which is published from Madras. It has been stated in this magazine.

[English]

"According to sources in the State Intelligence, as soon as the letter was round, the Assistant Commissioner sent it to Commissioner Durai who in turn handed it to Home Secretary R. Nagarajan. By 10.30 p.m. copies of resignation letter and the four page appeal to partymen had reached all newspaper offices. It is said that policemen in plain clothes took them to newspapers."

[English]

What else could be more regretting? We sympathise with Kumari Jayalalitha because she was our colleague and we used to share views while sitting in the Rajya Sabha and the Central Hall. What right does anyone have to insult an ex-M.P. or an ex M.L.A. in this manner. When a lady of Kumari Jayalalitha's Calibre can be insulted in this country, and is not allowed to speak and forced to resign, then how can the honour of others be safeguarded? Even today, she is scared of coming out of her house, she was virtually beaten up and a P.W.D. Minister even tore her clothes. Has this ever happened in our country? We feel satisfied with these words that she was an actress. People should just think how they would feel if the ladies of their own family are treated in this manner...

SHRISYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN: Say something about Papi Posh also.

DR. G.S. RAJHANS: How can you talk of Papi Posh when your party has also done the same. How can you justify the ill-treatment meted out to Kumari Jayalalitha? This is extremely regretting. Just because she has joined hands with Congress and has merged both the groups of A.I.D.M.K. due to which the position of Shri Karunanidhi is threatened, and because of that you people will recourse to violence and will then justify the same. This is very sad and regretting. My submission is that the Tamil Nadu Government should be dismissed. I submit that a

C.B.I. enquiry should be got conducted into it, the Tamil Nadu Government should be dismissed and it should make a public apology. This is so because this incident took place in Tamil Nadu Assembly and it may be repeated in any other Assembly, or even in this very House. How can you tolerate and justify this. This is a matter of great concern. A thorough C.B.I. investigation should be got conducted into this incident. Whenever the question of atrocities on women arises, our attention is completely diverted to the Supriya case, in which no action was taken even when the grand-daughter-in-law of a Chief Minister was shot dead. The Chief Ministers talk of morality but what could be more regretting than the fact that we accept atrocities quietly. That Chief Minister and those who give protection of such people should have been arrested and a C.B.I. enquiry should have been got conducted against them. But the entire action has been kept lying pending. My submission is that no matter how much we criticise the atrocities on women, the entire thing ends merely with a discussion and is not proceeded any further. We read in newspapers everyday about bride burning and we simply ignore it by being contented that this mishappening did not involve us. This may happen with anybody. A very good slogan was given during one of the *dhamas* in the Supriya case that "Daan do dahej do, aur bahu ko maar do." Otherwise also, the brides and these poor girls are burnt alive.

SHRISYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN: Tell us about the Papiya Posh.

DR. G.S. RAJHANS: Why are you feeling some, difficulty? We are already speaking about you only.

SHRISYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN: Tell us about the Papiya Posh in Bihar.

DR. G.S. RAJHANS: I am just telling about it that those who were responsible for it have been punished... (*Interruptions*)... Both you as well as I understand this... (*Interruptions*)... This has happened in the family of your Chief Minister but why does his

[Dr. G.S. Rajhans]

son justify it here? ... (*Interruptions*)... I will not let you speak unless it is your turn. Let me speak... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SHAMINDER SINGH: Demand the dismissal of the Chief Minister of Bihar also... (*Interruptions*)

DR. G.S. RAJHANS: It is my turn so please let me speak. You may speak on your turn... (*Interruptions*)

I would like to make 2-3 submissions. This may take place in any family and should therefore be taken seriously. My submission is that just as the photographs of terrorists are shown on T.V., similarly the photographs of the culprits found responsible for burning a lady or a girl in a family should be shown on television. The media of doordarshan is the mightiest one these days. As such the Government publishes the photograph of culprits in the newspapers. Apart from this, just as the photograph of a mission people is shown on T.V., similarly, the photograph of these criminals too should be shown on T.V. so that their relatives and friends may know about their misdeeds and may socially boycott them.

I will conclude after making one more point since the hon. Minister has to reply. People who have been on a visit to the Western countries, must have observed it at least I have, that woman is given great regards. This is so because in those countries from the very beginning everybody in a family is trained that the status of female is higher than that of the males. In those countries whenever even the poorest woman happens to travel by a bus, the richest persons sitting in the same bus will offer her their seats. Even in queue men give priority to the female. In winter, season when there is snow fall, men and women often wear overcoats. If a lady visits somebody's house, the head of that family howsoever rich he is, will pick up her overcoat to hang it on the peg. Therefore, the question is that of the mentality. If nothing else, we should at least take the

lesson from the West of respecting the woman. This training may be imparted from the very childhood. In this regard, I would submit that Shri Rajiv Gandhi has taken a very good step by making a reservation of 30 per cent for women in the Panchayati Raj. The Government should spend maximum possible amount on education of women so that they may raise their voice against any misdemeanour. The entire problem will get solved when they become economically independent and for this the Government should educate them. I would like to submit that this is not a matter of just one party or society or a village but that of the whole nation. Recently, a girl in my neighbourhood in Delhi had to face atrocities. Her parents were not in a position to give dowry and therefore her husband, her brother-in-law and even father-in-law used to beat her, but she did not get justice. I took her father to the Police Commissioner who took an immediate action and set all the things right. But how many of such people I can take to the Police Commissioner to get them justice. Or to what extent you can do the same. The need is change of mentality. We all should change this mentality in our own way. We deliver exhaustive speeches for speech sake and people also say that gods live there where women are adored. Someone has said that this is only just for making statement in the same way as a dishonest person says "Satyamev Jayate" i.e. truth always triumphs. Similarly, if we say so only in our speeches, it is meaningless. This will not serve any purpose, unless we practice it ourselves in our life with a determination to bring about a change in our society. We will have to take a pledge in this regard. Atrocities on women will not stop unless we take a pledge in this regard.

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Home Minister will reply

to the debate at the end of it. I am only intervening.

You are aware that the implementation machinery is not with the Department of Women and Child Development. It is the Home Ministry and the State machineries which have really got to be geared to implement the legislation which we monitor through Parliament.

I have noted the many points which have been raised in the discussion. There are a few of them which I would like to reply to, at this initial stage.

One is that we do have legislation. We have been from time to time receiving your support for amendments there in order to plug the loopholes.

Very often suggestions are made by women's groups and by various experts in the field.

Efforts have been made from time to time to collect the figures of atrocities committed on women and those figures have been given by the Home Ministry to this House. The cases of atrocities on women are recorded in police stations. But, as has been rightly said, many many cases are not recorded at all because generally there is a feeling of nervousness among women about going to police stations and coming face to face with the police machinery at the grass root level, for various reasons which I will explain. But, I do want to say that awareness among women in the country has grown tremendously over the last decade, particularly after the UN Decade; and with the general awareness that has come about among Indian women, the women's movement has really been strengthened. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order please. We are discussing a serious matter. Why are you laughing all of a sudden?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: The second reason for improvement in the position of registering of crimes in police stations

by women, of crimes committed against them is the plugging of the loopholes in law through amendments, as a result of which many many more crimes are now registered, which were not registered before. Women who were afraid of talking about many things are now talking about them; and they are going in for this sort of registration for justice to be done to them. Take the question of rape, for instance. Just a few years ago, no parent or family would allow a rape victim, the girl, to ever talk about it or even to go to a police station even though she was the victim because society always looked down upon her as she has become the victim of such a crime. But, today things are changing, and it is a good sign that more and more of these are coming to light and are being recorded and the machinery is being geared up to meet it. But, I do agree and I admit that the implementation machineries need to be strengthened and sensitised and made to be responsive to the changing needs of women in this country. Many many more women are coming out to work and are travelling alone in public transport, and they have to face various challenges. Strangely, society always tries to take undue advantage of women. Whether it is the girl going to college or whether she is travelling in DTC buses or she is at work. We have so many cases which come to us of harassment of women even in Government offices, or in private offices. Various demands are being made on women and if they do not fall in line, then either their records are spoiled or they are transferred to far-away places, away from their families; or other kind of harassment takes place at work. These are probably many unrecorded atrocities of another kind which women face also within their families. Here, I would like to ask as to how many of us are not discriminating in our families between our sons and daughters when it comes to property, when it comes to education. When it comes to education, we feel that a son even if he gets a third-class, must always get the best of education, even if he has to go to Karnataka to a donation college and pay donation to get him in. But a girl, even if she gets a first-class, after a particular point, we take it.

[Smt. Margaret Alva]

[Translation]

It does not matter, let her sit at home since she is to get married.

[English]

There is always this social discrimination which parents themselves and very often mothers within the family practise and this naturally reflects itself in various ways in various fields.

Sir, it is the normal practice for Members to make charges and walk out, and not to listen to the replies. I am sorry that my friend and colleague Mrs. Goswami has not waited to listen to the reply. She seems to suggest that a change of Government changes society's attitude towards women. I am sorry, I do not agree. Nor have I seen, from experience of statistics, that the spirit of education changes it. Every speaker agrees that in spite of education, in spite of the urban impact of the so-called developmental process, atrocities on girls and women in cities are also increasing. We talk about dowry. We have a law: We have the rules for Government servants. We have all such things. All such things have been done. Yet, it has been mentioned that the highest dowry paid is for the IAS Officers. The hon. Home Minister is here. I do not know what he would like to say about it as far as his Ministry is concerned. But here I am speaking about the dowry for IAS Officers, for IPS Officers etc. We have the most educated demanding the highest prices as if they are bridegrooms on sale and when they come back with green cards and with foreign degrees, the price goes up. It is a shame that with all their degrees, Ph.Ds, they become bridegrooms on sale to their girls at home when they come back home.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV (Nalanda): Their degrees should be taken back.

[English]

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: I have already mentioned that they fetch the maximum price in the matrimonial market.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: It is true, somebody had said that the mothers were responsible. Yes, the mothers-in-law are responsible. But why do the educated sons fall in line with the demands of their mothers, when they come back with all their degrees? All that I am saying is that these crimes are not limited to a particular section, to a particular social strata or to the uneducated or to the particular economic groups alone. This seems to be something which we accept.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAMINDER SINGH (Faridkot): If 50 per cent tax is imposed on them, the number of such cases may be reduced to some extent.

SHRIUTTAMRATHOD (Hingoli): What is the position in respect of the Members of Parliament?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: I would like to tell this also.

[English]

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: If it is a session of question and answer, then I will be drawn away from my own speech. I am coming to a point about which somebody raised a question. It is generally said that the politicians have the lowest dowry premium because their careers are the most uncertain.

[Translation]

God knows where will they be after a period of five years and who knows what happens next.

(Interruptions)

[English]

So, they are not very much in demand. So, I must say that our hon. Deputy-Speaker got married last year.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Why are you bringing me in?

(Interruptions)

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU (Gobichettipalayam): At that time, he was in very good demand. (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: I am only saying this that this is not a political issue. Members may sit on that side or this side. You may be in a State where any Government is running this system. I don't think that this changes the statistics or changes the situation very much. I would like to point out that Members spoke about making the implementation system more effective. We passed a law in 1984. I have been repeatedly mentioning in the this House and in my letters to the Chief Ministers about the Family Courts Bill. It was hoped that the Family Courts would attend to a number of legal and other problems faced by women in the family, which could be in a different atmosphere outside the law courts. I am sorry to say that West Bengal, about which the Member spoke so much, has not yet set up a Family Court even in Calcutta. They say that there are no problems in West Bengal; probably every man in Bengal is a saint. But I do not know. Their experience might be such. But I would like to say that only five Family Courts have been set up since 1984 in Jaipur, Kanpur, Lucknow, Madras and Bangalore. None of the others has set up a single Family Court. Therefore, the enforcement of laws is going on in the normal process which takes years for a matter to be heard or to be settled. I would appeal to all the Members who think that everything is the responsibility of the Central Government to please have enough pressure put on their own State Governments and see that the family courts are established as early as possible.

Somebody spoke about the question of Sati. It is true that there was one incident and the reaction of the Government was immediate. I must say here that both in Rajasthan as well as here, the Government acted immediately to see that it would never happen again. Well, you can say: why should it have happened? Yes, it should not have happened. But the point is, we immediately got into action including campaigns in this area, to tell the women that they do not need to die. We are prepared to look after them. I am glad to say that the first Home in one of the most Sati-prone areas in Rajasthan, in Sikar, for widows, was opened as a joint project just last month and 15000 women turned up for the inauguration, and the whole town of Sikar was up with slogan: "we are not to die, we will live and we will fight." This is a changed atmosphere in this very district. A holiday had been declared for the schools and colleges and girls, children and everybody participated in this big programme. We had *Pad Yatra* through the streets appealing to the people: "if you cannot look after your widows, send them to our homes and we will look after them." We have 33 of them with their children already in this Home. And I am getting requests for more Homes to be opened in Jhunjhunu and other districts where there are these problems. So, social awareness and this kind of campaign will produce the result because after all Indiraji used to repeatedly say: "these are not women's problems. They are social problems and they have to be handled by society as a whole." Therefore, I appeal to all sections particularly to my friends on the other side, that the discussion started very well on a general note. But then, we start saying: "if you have CPM Government, you have no atrocities, and if you have the Congress Government, you have the atrocities." Then it comes down to a level where the real discussion and sorting out of this problem does not become possible. I would, therefore, appeal that we stick to the problem as it stands because all of us, as a nation, as a community, have to sort it out.

A question of inquiries has been raised. I want to say here that whether it was the

[Smt. Margaret Alva]

case of Supriya or any other matter, without the consent of the State Government, we cannot directly interfere in investigation. The Home Ministry has issued directives from time to time particularly about the need to have a post mortem by two doctors, if it is within seven years after marriage. And various other safeguards are there, namely, that the body cannot be disposed of unless a family member of the girl is satisfied that they have looked into everything and seen the body before it is burnt or buried, and so on and so forth. But as I said, unless there is a commitment to implement it at all levels—and if senior and very important people feel that they are beyond the law, whether it comes to a *post mortem* in a hospital or to other rules being followed, it becomes very difficult for me to stand here and say that everything is all right. I do not think anybody can be above the law. The dowry laws must apply to everybody—political and non-political persons, official and to all. As far as Sati is concerned, you probably... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VIR SEN (Khurja): How can it apply to a Chief Minister?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: This is where I am saying that it becomes very necessary to create public awareness. I do not want to go into details because time is limited. I went, after that incident of Supriya, to Haryana. I had a public meeting with women. They had invited me. They said: "We want to know the truth. Here is a daughter of Haryana and we have the right to know the truth." I had agreed to help investigate it. I do not want to go into greater details as it is now in the court.

The other thing is about the decision-making processes. It has rightly been said that women have to be brought into the decision-making process. They must have a voice in implementing programmes for them. And I am glad that in the Panchayats—now that the Prime Minister has announced it, we are hoping and because of the commitment made in the party forum and otherwise—30

per cent of the seats would be guaranteed to women in the villages, in the block, as well as in the district panchayats.

AN HON. MEMBER: There is no support!

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: You may not support; but the women of India are not looking at it as an Opposition or Government issue; they are looking at it as an issue which will bring women into the grassroot level decision making process. We have been kept out for very long. I think the time has come when their voice at the grassroot must be heard. Uptil now the male-dominated machinery decided as to what is good for us, they have decided how much money should go to us, they have decided how it must be used and they have also decided that women must be happy with that much. So, they have remained where they are.

I think things are changing and I am certain that with this change, you will see more and more women emerging, who will come into your Assemblies and into the Parliament to take many of your seats in the coming elections.

SHRI Y.S. MAHAJAN (Jalgaon): Does it apply to women in the Government service also?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: I will come to that also.

There is one more aspect about women coming into this Chamber. It was again raised. The question is not of Opposition or Government. But women need to be secure even inside legislatures and inside the elected bodies. It might be somebody else today, it might be me here also. The question is, if we cannot stand as equals in an Assembly or if we are to be attacked simply because we are women and our modesty is to be outraged in public, then no woman can stand up and fight like this. I think all sections should condemn it. Whether it is a man or a woman in a House he or she has a right to be there; and whoever the Member is, she has a right

to be treated as an equal citizen. We look with dismay at some of the trends which have recently come. Women, I want to say, cannot be shut out simply by threatening them or frightening them. The more we are threatened, the more we will stand up and fight back.

We have spoken about the need for having more women police officers. I agree that in every police station we need them and I hope the Home Minister will respond to this plea. We have been repeatedly making the plea that we need to recruit more women police particularly at the point where the public especially women come into contact with the law enforcement machinery in the police stations.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (Dhenkanal): What about women in the Armed Forces? When a Bill was introduced, it was the Government which opposed it.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Yes, I suppose in the Armed Forces they are afraid of many other things

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: There are women Armed Forces in Canada, United States, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, England, etc.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: At least we should start with the police. There are two levels; one is the police and the second is the lower judiciary. I think we need more women magistrates, judges and so, on who are sensitive to the needs of women who come before the lower courts.

SHRI K. RAMACHANDRA REDDY (Hindupur): Why don't you reserve 30% of seats in those jobs also?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: I will come to that. I must say that I have recently seen it and I don't know how the Home Minister will respond to this. The way some of our women police officers have been treated before Commissions of Inquiry and others, I don't think any woman wants to

come into the police after that. I think women police themselves are in need of protection these days!

I must say that the need to sensitize the administration has been felt very strongly. We have introduced several programmes, from our Department, for sensitizing our implementation machineries, the media, the police, the law enforcement agencies and every group that is needed to be sensitized to women's issues. I am glad that the Department of Personnel has responded to this and we have now for all IAS and IPS officers, in service as well as at the beginning, special training capsules on women developmental issues as part of their training, so that right from the beginning they know what is the problem and how they have to respond in the changing situation.

Social welfare organisations and women's groups as I said have become very much aware of all this. We have now provided that lists of women would be given to police stations from these registered bodies who would help with the enforcement processes, with the police, if necessary for investigation, helping in registering of crimes and so on, and to help women in need. We also, have a programme of 'Homes for Women in distress'. We have made a special provision for reservation of 10% accommodation in Working Women Hostels, for widows, in need of accommodation. We have changed the rules to allow women with children to come into these Homes, so that no widow or woman is kept out of the Working Women Hostels because she has little children on her hands. We provide for day-care and other such supportive mechanisms for women, that were needed. The need, of course, is for employment and training for employment and we are in the process of working out many schemes, through the New Educational Policy and through the non-formal sector, to help them, particularly those who need to stand on their own feet. The Prime Minister announced in the House that very soon, we would be appointing a National Commissioner for Women's Rights.

[Smt. Margaret Alva]

This, I think, is what everybody has been asking for,—an independent machinery that would come into operation, to see that the States and other agencies follow up correctly the investigative processes and do not allow these crimes to go undetected and unpunished. This would be of a great support to women who are the victims of various types of crimes. We are in the process of setting it up and before we meet in the next Session, I am sure, we will be able to make the official announcement about the details of the Commissioner for Women's Rights.

Sir, I have put the various points together and I have dealt with them. The question of female infanticide has been spoken about. We have condemned it and in fact, I have written to the Chief Minister of Rajasthan. Necessary legal proceedings were also launched at that time.

When it comes to crimes against women, I am sure, you will agree with me that no politics and no status should come between justice and the crime that has been committed. If we are committed to this, I do not think, there would be very many problems.

Sir, I am just answering the points which have been raised today. But I would like to say that as far as the enforcement is concerned, it is the responsibility of the Home Ministry and I would on behalf of all of us, request the Home Ministry to see that the laws which have been passed by the Houses of Parliament are implemented more vigorously and more conscientiously and that the police become more conscious of their responsibilities as protectors of women and not as their exploiters. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD (Hingoli): I want to ask only one question. The law differentiates between women of different character. i.e. women of good character and women of bad character.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister has spoken. It is not that the debate is over.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): The debate is not over.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU (Gobichettipalayam): Sir, with regard to this discussion, I am very much thankful to the Chair, because, such a discussion is very very necessary at this juncture.

Sir, with regard to the social discrimination against women, even now, it is still persists and the Government has taken so many legal measures in order to remove that. Equality and equal status to women must prevail in the country. The Government has brought in so many amendments to various Acts. The Government has made amendments to the Dowry Prohibition Act, Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, Indian Evidence Act, Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and so many other Acts. In order to make them effective, a machinery must be brought in. There is a gap which persists between the policy pronouncements and their implementation. The gap is being widened. In order to reduce the gap, a monitoring agency must be there. So, the Government must take it up immediately in order to implement the laws strictly, in letter and spirit.

Sir, a new provision has also been introduced in the Indian Penal Code. Now, the onus of proof has been shifted to the accused. Usually, in criminal cases, the onus of proof always, lies with the prosecution. Now, the Government has come forward to shift the onus of proof to the accused. So, in cases of cruelty on married women, the onus has been shifted to the accused in the Dowry Death Act. Two new enactments have been brought in in the statute book recently, namely, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 and Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 aims at prohibiting the portrayal of women in

indecent, derogatory and denigrating manner through books, pamphlets and advertisements. Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act aims at preventing and glorification of Sati.

The law and other aspect rests actually with the State Governments. Unless the State Governments take an effective step with regard to implementation of these Acts there is no possibility of the security to the women folk. At this juncture, I want to point out that there are so many State Governments in this country but here is a State Government in Tamil Nadu where actually women-folk has no security at all. Here I want to tell the House that in 1975 when this very DMK Government was in power, then there was a district conference at Coimbatore where one of the members who is a Minister now spoke with regard to Madam Indira Gandhi. This very Chief Minister was also present there. From the dias he said that he wanted to bring a Widow Re-marriage Act in order to help Madam Indira Gandhi. You please think of it. That very DMK government is in power now. The very same DMK Chief Minister, ...**.... who tried to attack Madam Indira Gandhi when she came to Madurai and Madras is there. At that time there was a blood-stain on the saree of Madam Indira Gandhi. The DMK Ministers and also the Chief Minister, ...**.....pointed out about the blood-stain on the saree of Madam Gandhi. After attacking her by means of stones when there was a blood-stain, she was criticised and they wanted to take it as a laughing stock. Is it correct, Sir? They very same Ministry is in power now. That is why I want to say to this august House and I also seek protection for the women-folk in Tamil Nadu.

On 25th March, 1989 a violent incident took place inside Tamil Nadu Assembly. Nowhere in the country such an incident has taken place. The Opposition leader in Tamil Nadu is AIADMK leader, Miss Jayalalitha. In order to dis-lodge her from the position of Opposition leader actually there was an attempt to outrage her modesty by DMK Ministry. I would like to know whether such an

incident should take place and that too when we give so much respect to women. Even this country is named as Mother India. We can rivers after the names of women, that is, Yamuna, Ganga, Kavery, etc. We are giving so much respect to women but here is a government which instead of giving protection to women are insulting women like anything. That is why we request the Government to take action immediately against that government for breach of privilege which took place on 25th March, 1989. Action should be initiated against the Ministers who involved themselves in outraging the modesty of the Opposition leader there. Sir, so far we have given so many memoranda to the Prime Minister, President and the Home Minister but they are of no use. The incident which took place on the 25th March, 1989 is a black mark not only in the history of Tamil Nadu but also in the history of India. Under the very nose of the Chief Minister, such an incident took place and what action has been initiated by the Chief Minister so far? What action has been taken against the Ministers or the officers concerned? So far, he has not taken any action against them. When such is the case, why did not the Central Government go to the rescue of the Opposition Leader and thus to the women folk of Tamil Nadu in order to take prompt action against the Chief Minister and against the Government of Tamil Nadu? Actually, the Members of the Opposition were brutally assaulted, mercilessly attacked and indiscriminately abused. Miss Jayalalitha was abused in such a manner which cannot be described. No woman is safe in the hands of Tamil Nadu Government. I think that the women folk of not only Tamil Nadu but also of India will never forgive the sinners, i.e., the Chief Minister and other Ministers. The women folk will not forgive the sinners in the ruling DMK Government. Sir, it is was a pre-planned attack in order to dislodge her from the leadership, with a view to cripple the voice of democracy and to malign the Opposition with the active support of the Chief Minister and other Ministers. I am talking of the incident which took place on the 25th March, 1989. Even the Congress (I) Leader,**....and Deputy Leader,**....and

[Sh. P. Kolandaivelu]

other Congress Member were also attacked on that day. Actually, chapels, paper weights and mikes were used as missiles inside the Assembly. Such was the incident which took place on the 25th March, 1989. On the 25th, the wife of late Dr. MGR, MRS. Janaki went to the hospital to see Miss Jayalalitha who was under treatment. After seeing her, Mrs. Janaki returned home. Immediately police personnel was sent to the house of late Shri MGR and the house was raised on that day. Not only that.....**.....brother's shop was ransacked and thousands of rupees had been taken away and properties had been santched. There is no democracy at all in Tamil Nadu. Even thousands of our party people had been taken under arrest and even now, agitation is going on everyday. Even now public meetings are taking place everyday in order to condemn the incident which took place on 25th March, 1989.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can continue your speech on Monday. We will now take up the next item.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM BHAGAT PASWAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am on a point of order. I seek your protection. I wanted to speak on atrocities on women. My name was on the top, but I have been left out. I may please be given time to speak on this subject.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: When we discuss this subject next time, I will call you. You can speak on the drinking water problem if you want.

16.20 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

[*English*]

**Acute Shortage of Drinking Water In
various parts of the country**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House will now take up discussion on the situation arising out of acute shortage of drinking water in various parts of the country and the steps taken by the Government in that regard.

Shri Harish Rawat.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, most parts of the country are either reeling under drinking water crisis or are likely to face it soon. The Government had made an announcement in 1980 that drinking water would be provided to all the 5,07,000 villages in the country by the year 1990. But it is regretted that the results have not been in commensurate with the money and energy spent on this. It was also said that under the International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade Scheme, we will provide potable water to about 90 per cent of the villages and 50 per cent rural population and 100 per cent urban population will start getting clean water. I do not say that the Central Government did not provide funds for it. So far as the position of funds is concerned, a lot of money has been spent under this head and a lot of money has also been released for this purpose. If we go by the figures available in this respect, a huge sum of Rs. 2700 crores was earmarked for this purpose during the Sixth Five Year Plan and a sum of Rs. 3535 crores was earmarked during the Seventh Five Year Plan.

16.22 hrs.

[SHRI SHARAD DIGHE *in the Chair*]