

12.42 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF
URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

[English]

Increasing atrocities on Women

DR. CHINTA MOHAN (Tirupati) : I call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

"The increasing atrocities on women and the steps taken by the Government in that regard."

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (S BUTA SINGH) : Sir, Government view with great concern the incidents of atrocities on women, frequent incidents of bride burning and of dowry deaths. Two statements showing available Statewise figures on crimes against women during the years 1983 to 1986 are laid on the table of the House.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-3396-A/86.]

Action has been taken to plug the loopholes in the existing legislation dealing with dowry cases in order to make them more effective and stringent. The Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 have been amended by the criminal law (Second Amendment) Act, 1983 to deal effectively not only with dowry death cases but also with cases of cruelty to married women. A new section 498-A IPC has been added which provides for punishment to the husband or relations of the husband who cruelly treat the woman with imprisonment upto three years besides fine. The same has been made cognizable. Section 304B, which has also been added recently, provides a minimum of 7 years of punishment in dowry death cases.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 has been amended by the Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 1984 to make the provisions more stringent and effective. By this Act offences in original Dowry Prohibition Act have been made cognizable,

ailable and non-compoundable. Provision has also been made for enhanced punishment for giving or taking dowry. The Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 1984 was further amended to make the provisions more stringent and effective. Minimum punishment for taking or abetting the taking of dowry has been raised to 5 years and a fine of Rs 15,000. Offences under the amended Act have been made non-bailable. As a result of this amendment, the burden of proving that there was no demand for dowry will be on the person who takes or abets the taking of the dowry. It has also been decided to appoint Dowry Prohibition Officers by the State Govts. which will greatly help in effective implementation of the Act. These officers will be assisted by the Advisory Boards consisting of not more than five Social Welfare Officers out of whom two shall be women.

12 45 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair.*]

As a part of the drive to combat offences against women, detailed instructions were issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs to all State Govts. and Union Territory Administrations about the steps to be taken in all cases of unnatural deaths of married women. According to these instructions, the State Govts, and Union Territory Administrations are required to take serious notice of all cases of attempted suicides or death in suspicious circumstances of young married women during the first 10 years of their marriage. All such cases are required to be investigated by the officers not below the rank of Dy. Superintendent of Police. Where Post-mortem is done, it is required to be done by a team of two doctors. Disposal of dead body without post mortem is not to be permitted except with 'No Objection Certificate' by the Police. The Police are not to give 'No Objection Certificate' unless the dead body had been seen by the parents or guardians or close relatives from the bride's side of the family.

As far as other criminal offence against women such as rape, illegal sale of girls for flesh trade are concerned an Act was enacted in 1956 which is known as 'Suppression of Immoral Traffic in women

and Girls Act'. It was amended in 1978 to make good some inadequacies in the implementation of the Act in the light of the experience gained. Despite amendments to the Act, it was felt that its enforcement had not been effective enough to deal with the problem of Immoral Traffic in all its dimensions. Suggestions were received from various voluntary organisations working for women for enlarging the scope of the Act and making minimum penal standards for correctional treatment and rehabilitation of the victims. Keeping these suggestions in view, the scope of the Act has been widened to cover all persons who are exploited sexually for commercial purposes. The amendments made from time to time have made the Act stringent and effective by enhancing the period of imprisonment where offences are committed against minors and children. It has also been decided to appoint Trafficking Police Officers, who will have the powers to investigate offences which involve more than one State. This would facilitate early prevention/detection of offences against women. Court cases concerning offences under Suppression of Immoral Traffic in women and Girls Act in certain cases involve more than one State and therefore, judicial enquiry and prosecution took a long time before such cases could be decided. It has, therefore, been decided to set-up Special Courts for trying offences which have inter-state ramifications. The amended Act is now known as Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1986.

On the suggestion of the National Police Commission the Eighth Finance Commission had recommended funds for the creation of additional posts of women constables. The Government have accepted this and provided Rs. 4.31 crores as grant payable to the State Governments for the recruitment of 2153 women constables.

The Government is extending grant-in-aid to voluntary organisations for establishing and running of Short Stay Homes. The central idea behind the scheme is to protect and rehabilitate those women and girls who are facing social and moral danger due to family problems, mental strain, social ostracism exploitation or any cause which may leave a woman in a situation where she is exposed to any kind of danger. Under

the scheme the following services/facilities are provided; Medical care, Psychiatric treatment, Case-work service, Occupational therapy, Social facilities and adjustment and education, vocational and recreational activities. During the year, the scheme of Short Stay Home for Woman and Girls was revised, and five new Short Stay Homes were set up, thus raising the total number of Homes to 26.

In addition, Voluntary Action Bureau was set up by the Central Social Welfare Board in May 1982 to meet the challenge of crimes against women and children and to create awakening and social consciousness among citizens. The case taken up under this service relate to family discord, maladjustment and exploitation of women and children. Besides, counselling services, the victims are provided short stay facilities, medical and legal aid, and police assistance, wherever needed. The main objective of this services is to prevent families from breaking up by bringing about reconciliation. Voluntary Action Bureaux have been set up at headquarters of all States/Union Territories except in Goa, Daman and Diu and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Besides, 18 Family Counselling Centres have been sanctioned to well established institutions in 11 States. There has been a steady increase in the number of cases registered at these Bureaux, and it is heartening to observe that the majority of these cases are amicably reconciled and settled. The Bureau also keeps a follow-up watch on the settled cases for some period to ensure that discord does not recur.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN (Tirupati) : The statement given by the Minister is very evasive and it is elaborate. In the egalitarian society the atrocities are continuing in spite of 39 years of independence. Atrocities are continuing on the vulnerable section of society. Some time ago in Bhagpat Town one Mrs. Tyagi was harassed, humiliated and her breast was out. She was gang raped amongst hundreds of young men.

A young girl from Kerala was taken to Saudi Arabia. She was gang raped by the Saudi Arabians.

[Dr. Chinta Mohan]

In Puri Shankracharia Muth a young girl was raped. Government must be knowing. Such is the condition of the poor women in the society.

Women in our country are being treated as second class citizens and there are atrocities on women in the form of rape, dowry deaths, etc.

Rapes and dowry deaths have become an international phenomena. It is not only in our country but it is continuing in other parts of the world.

Statistics show that in the United States there are 26 cases per lakh of population. In Japan it is 3 cases per lakh of population. Coming to the United Kingdom it is 2 cases per lakh of population. But, unfortunately, in our country, particularly in Manipur there are 19 cases per lakh of population—rapes and other dowry deaths. In Jammu and Kashmir there are 15 cases per lakh of population. In Tamilnadu there are 13 cases and in Madhya Pradesh 9 cases of such incidents are there.

Recently I happened to meet an accused person in court. I asked him what made him to commit the rape on a young girl? He told me before the incident he went to a Hindi movie. There he saw a 6½ ft. tall good looking hero raping some heroine. That made him to do so. That inspired him. That inculcated him to rape the girl. Before release, the films are censored. We are censoring so many things but Government is allowing rapes in movies. Without one rape scene we cannot complete a movie and the Government is allowing it. It goes to show that the Government is encouraging rapes and this in particular is not a good example. That should not be allowed.

Coming to the incidents of rape in age groups—less than 16 years age group the incident is about 24%, between 16-30 years 62% and more than 30 years it is 14%.

Coming to the dowry death, though Uttar Pradesh is topping the list, we have

in 1984, 182 cases, in 1985 we have 332 cases and in 1986 it is 110 cases. Coming to Andhra Pradesh, the dowry deaths have come down. In 1984 they came down to 6, in 1985 they came down to 3 and in 1986 they have come down to 2. Particularly when we look at the Opposition States, the incidents of rape dowry deaths have come down, particularly in West Bengal, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Assam. I congratulate the Chief Ministers of those States for taking such correct steps to reduce the incidence of rape and dowry deaths.

Coming to the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, though Tamil Nadu is topping the list, in other parts of the country it is still continuing.

Coming to the personal law, we have a uniform law for a thief, we have a uniform law for a pick-pocket but we do not have a common uniform law for women. We have so many personal laws. Recently also we have amended one personal law. About the Hindu personal law, some time back the problem began when a young doctor married a Hindu girl and went abroad and came back to India. After coming back to India he developed some sort of misunderstanding with his wife and divorced her. Some time after the divorce, he came to an understanding with her again and wanted to marry the same girl. But the Hindu personal law did not permit him to marry her. I want to know what steps the Government is going to take to help such people.

Also we have recently amended the Delhi (Amendment) Bill on Eve-Teasing. Previously the punishment provided was three months rigorous imprisonment and after the Amendment you have reduced the punishment to seven days with fine. Does it mean that the Government is encouraging eve-teasing by reducing the punishment. Now we have Dowry Prohibition Act, but it is only a 'barking', but no biting because it does not have any teeth at all'. The dowry death are still continuing and the Government is not able to take any action. I want to know, after the Dowry Prohibition Act how many cases you have registered and how many people you have saved.

Long time back Sati was challenged by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and untouchability was challenged by Mahatma Gandhi. If Mr. Buta Singh comes forward and challenges the atrocities on women, I will be very glad. But unfortunately nobody is able to take up this task and women in the society need some sort of a special social status. But they are treated as second-class citizens. We need a catalyst for social change and we need a catalyst for social transformation, but unfortunately nothing is happening in this country since Independence. Women in society need economic independence. We can give them economic independence by giving them reservations in jobs, seats in Assemblies and Parliament etc. But unfortunately, nobody is looking after this work and I request the Government to come forward saying that there should be equal right for women in the property of the family. I want that the Government should think about it, particularly when you are giving house sites and land to the weaker sections of society after the Land Ceiling Act was passed. I want pattas should be given in the name of both wife and husband so that when they get some misunderstanding, both will be able to continue together at least on account of the land being in the name of both wife and husband. At the time of sale of the property both the wife and husband should sign the sale deed. I request that the Government should come forward with legislation stating that any property should be in the name of both wife and husband. Some time back we formed a Joint Select Committee in which Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee was there and also Shrimati Pramila Dandavate was there. They made so many amendments and recommendations. I want to know from the Government what are their recommendations which the Government have accepted and how many recommendations were implemented. The Law Commission also made so many recommendations and I want to know what recommendations you have accepted.

I request the Government to come forward with some legislation or amendment in the Constitution giving special status to women.

With these words, I conclude.

13.00 hrs.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat) :
Sir, the figures which have been supplied by the Home Minister in the statement reveal that in spite of all these legal provisions which have been narrated by him, in the statement—amendments which have been brought here to strengthen the law and so on—the figures given by him in the statement showing the number of cases reported as crime against women from the year 1983 to 1985 can only, in that case, prove that these laws are only on paper. The Government is incapable both at the Centre and the State Governments also, in implementing these laws, because the figures show so. I cannot go into details now. But in every case, whether it is rape—they are classified like this in the Government figures—rape, molestation, chain snatching, kidnapping of women and girls, eve-teasing and dowry deaths. Under these different heads, for 1983, 1984 and 1985, in every single case, the total figures—in some State, of course, as my friend just now remarked, the situation seems to have improved a little bit—but if you take the total figures for the whole of India, in every one of these cases, the incidence has gone up. In the case of rape, from 5147 cases reported in 1983, it has gone up to 6189 in 1985. In the case of molestation, it has gone up from 11639 to 14984. Chain snatching, I leave that—chain snatching is something connected with a different kind of crime. Kidnapping of women and children have gone up from 5831 cases to 7652. Eve-teasing has gone up from 2502 to 3471; and dowry deaths have gone up, according to the Government figures, from 343 in 1983 to 802 in 1985. These figures may not be giving a complete picture of the situation but they are enough to reveal that women are increasingly being made the victims, in this country of all these different types of crimes and atrocities. There are so many cases being reported every day in the Press. In fact, it was on the basis of these reports, the recent reports, that many Member, I think, were actuated to give notice for this call-attention.

I just refer briefly to some of them. I would like the Minister to say what the Government does in these cases. There is a report which has appeared just now, a

[Shri Indrajit Gupta]

few days ago, about the sale of girls—some of them 10 years old, 12 years old girls in Delhi who are being brought here from other parts of the country and then they are being sold for some large sums of money. And they are being taken, according to the press report, via Punjab and Rajasthan to Pakistan. I do not know whether it is true or not. But it gives here the location of where these unfortunate girls are being kept here, while they are in Delhi. They have mentioned Trans Jamuna colony of New seemapuri, Nizamuddin Jhuggis, Mangolpuri, Jamuna Bridge Jhuggis and all that. Specific mention is given of these localities where these smuggled girls are being brought and kept before they are disposed of for the flesh trade. So, I would like to know, in such cases where these things are brought to the notice of the Government unmentionable things have been happening here in Delhi itself—what the administration and what the police have been doing.

There was also a report a few days ago—I haven't got a reference with me just now—About some girls who are recovered from some kind of a hostel or something adjoining the Sisganj Gurdwara. It was mentioned there. In fact, these girls were found and some people were arrested. They have been brought and kept there. Probably they were brought from Bengal or from Bangladesh, young minor girls and, they were kept adjacent to the Sisganj Gurdwara, before they are taken and transported to the ultimate or whatever destination it may be. The police is not only totally incompetent and incapable but obviously they have no will to take any ruthless action.

AN HON. MEMBER : Collusion.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Collusion is there everywhere. Why should it not be here ? Collusion in the Punjab, we know what has it led to. Collusion may be here also because in a number of cases of atrocities, it is the policemen who are directly concerned.

You must have seen recently there has been lot of publicity on what took place

in a village called Thankamani in Idikki district of Kerala. I do not go into details. Enough publicity has been given where this village was raided by a large force of the state police. They broke into the houses of the villagers.

SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : It is misleading information. He is misleading the House. It is not correct.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The hon. Minister will reply. He will take care of it.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : It is admitted in the Assembly. Enquiry has been ordered.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will not allow anyone except Shri Indrajit Gupta. Nothing will go on record.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I am referring to various press reports.

SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Do not go by press reports alone. You must check with your source.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon. Minister will reply. Don't worry. He will take care of it.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : There is a reference to the wife of a Congress-I District Committee Member—I do not know it is mentioned here Mrs. Rajamma Thomas, wife of a Congress-I District Committee Member said, when she pleaded with the police, not to harm her children. She was pulled out of the house by the hair. One policeman held her from behind and another pushed her with a lathi. Then the men were all beaten up in their houses and a large number of women have complained. I do not know, I cannot prove that they were molested and raped.

Another point has been established and that is that in the Kerala Assembly, the Government is trying to cover up the actions of these police officers by saying that there is no need for an enquiry and

there is no prima facie case against them. Are we to take it that all these village-folk in this Thankamani village are velling lies that they have been molested or raped or something? At last, it is the job of the Government to find it. It is a serious matter.

SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMA-CHANDRAN : Enquiry is going on.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Enquiry is demanded by the people and Members of the Assembly and it is conceded by the Government.

(Interruptions)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : During last October and November, it is reported in the press, there is a case of one girl, 22 year old lady, called Brahmavati, she is a married woman, she is not raped. She has been tortured by policemen in the lock up as a result of which she died. A case is reported here extensively. please let me refer to one or two of these things.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You have taken 10 minutes.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Otherwise, what will women in the country think?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It is only *Calling Attention*. You have taken 10 minutes. If at all there is another discussion, let up decide about it. Let us see.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : In Gujarat, Baruch district, a lady Gunta Behn alleged that she was raped by many policeman.

* Nearer home, Tajindar Kaur was raped. She was married to a handicapped person. She was raped at the primary Health Centre in Madina in Rohtak. After that, she has been consistently harassed by police. She is quoted as saying: "Sometimes, I want to become phoolan Devi. I want to kill a few persons and then die myself". This is the kind of anguish that

these wretched women are feeling today.

I will finally refer, since you are ringing the bell, to one incident. A very interesting paper has been just presented at the 20th All-India police Science Congress which was held in Calcutta. The author of this paper is Mr. K. B. Vohra; DIG of the Criminal Investigation Department. He has said that it is a matter of great regret. In quite a few cases policemen have been involved in such atrocities. Such incidents not merely tarnish the image of the police but also seriously erode the public confidence in them. He has said that such cases of rape in which police are alleged or suspected to have been involved, should be investigated by only officers who are not below a certain rank. That is one of his concrete suggestions apart from all the proposals made by so many women organisations and public organisations that a special cell must be set up at each level whose job is only to investigate these complaints to see that action is taken, punitive action, penal action is taken against the offenders. All I am saying is that the hon. Home Minister has given statistics here—three or four pages—which proved that instead of going down, these cases of atrocities are going up from year to year which shows that either the law is innocuous, it has no effect whatsoever and the administration, police and other people are completely hand-in-glove with the people who are committing these crimes or they are thoroughly incompetent and incapable. They are also prone to corruption, as we know. Therefore, we would like to know from him the position. We cannot discuss at length on this occasion. But the Minister should tell us whether apart from this long recital of various legal measures that have been taken and which remain only on paper.—all the laws and what they are doing to strengthen the administration, to see that the police really act in these cases and to punish particularly the policemen and police officers who are found to be involved in these cases, who are supposed to be the custodians of the law, who are themselves behaving worse than the criminals. We want to know as to what the Government is doing.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Ajay Biswas.

SHRI AJOY BISWAS (Tripura West) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have gone through the statement of the hon. Home Minister. Actually, the Home Minister has stated as to what laws have been enacted or what are the steps the Central Government and the State Government are taking. All these are on the paper. Actually, the law which has been enacted or amended, has not been implemented properly. That is the main crux of the problem. In the statement I do not find anything about the future course of action of the Government about the economic measures which the Central Government is going to take in order to uplift the conditions of the women. We come across reports everyday that women are being raped, molested and tortured not only in the residential premises but even in police stations, Jails, hospitals and even in *Nari Niketans*. In my opinion, the maintain which is responsible is the social background of our country. The social background is feudal-biased and the capitalist system of economy is being kept into the social environment. We think that this should be dealt with in two ways. One way is that the laws are to be implemented strictly and the second thing is that more stringent laws are to be brought in; social reforms and the economic reforms are necessary. We find that most of the atrocities on the women are committed in the rural areas because of the land problems and land delineation. I am quoting one example. In 1984, the total number of incidents of murders, dacoities and all these things were 20159 and out of that 15,936 were committed in the rural areas. And the atrocities committed on tribals and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe women are more. What are the reasons? Because the landlords in the villages have a close link with the political circles, they have influence over administration and they can easily tackle the situation with the help of administration and with the help of political forces. Even in Delhi, the total number of women raped, dowry deaths, molestations, kidnapping, eve-teasing, etc., was 1,474 in 1984 and 1,466 in 1985. It reveals that even in the national Capital all types of tortures are being committed on woman. I want to bring this to the notice of the Central Government. Women

should be given economic freedom. Without economic freedom, without social development, this evil cannot be tackled; cannot be removed. In the industries we find that many women employees have been retrenched. The number of women employed in industries has come down. There is no plan, no economic policy of the Central Government, to uplift the condition of the women. If economic freedom for women is not there, if the position in the field of cultural affairs is not changed, then it is not possible to tackle the situation. I shall put some questions and I want the hon. Home Minister to give his replies. There are laws in the country. In 1984 and 1985, how many people were arrested and punished for atrocities committed on women? You have not given that information. What are the guidelines of the Central Government to the States to tackle the situation? What is it that the Central Government is going to do for the future, for safeguarding the interest of women in the field of industry, in the field of agriculture, in the field of cultural affairs? What schemes do the Central Government have to uplift the economic condition of the women in future?

DR. SUDHIR ROY (Burdwan) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is with a deep sense of anguish that I am participating in the debate; it is not with a 'holier than thou' attitude that I am taking part in the discussion. It is a grim reality that atrocities on women are increasing every day. Instead of passing stringent and more stringent laws, what is necessary is change of the social system. We are not here to indict the Home Minister personally; we have to indict the whole system in which we live. In pre-independent India, abolition of the zamindari was the battlecry, but conveniently the ruling Party shelved that slogan after independence. Consequently, barring a few States like West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, landlordism is still there, and because there is landlordism, because there is feudal exploitation in the rural areas, the landlords and their goons and thus rule. It is these people who commit atrocities on poor people, on the women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The police are at their beck and call. Only a few cases have been registered against these land-

lords; Therefore, unless we abolish landlordism, I apprehend that these atrocities will go on increasing.

Secondly a few years ago Justice A.N. Mullabrightly pointed out that police are the most organised criminals in the country. From the statistics given here we find that the police people are often responsible for increasing violence on women. Sir, our friend already has referred to the Thankamani in Idukki district and we find everywhere that women are being tortured and they are abused in police lock-up. We find that under public pressure police officials are suspended, they are transferred but within a short time they are re-instated with full pay. So, I want to know from the Hon. Minister as to how many police people have been accused and how many were really punished. We want the number. How many police people were accused of atrocities on women and how many of them are actually punished?

Thirdly, as our friend Dr. Chinta Mohan has already observed, in our media, in big commercial films and in the TV also women are portrayed as sex dolls. Why? Women are our mothers, sisters and daughters. They also toil and moil. Why don't they portray women as earning their bread by the sweat of their brow? Why don't they portray women as equal partners of men? But no. They are always portrayed as sex dolls and ev-tess are always the heroes. Why don't you take action against those film makers? These heroes always influence our young men. Therefore, my question to the Hon. Minister is, what happened to the Censor? Is it really existing? All sorts of violence and crimes against women are shown to the young people day in and day out.

With these words, I conclude Sir.

[*Translation*]

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, our leader Shri Indrajit Gupta has said that the figures are increasing in spite of all the efforts. Presently the figures concerning rape, molestation of women, chain snatching, kidnapping of women, eve

teasing and dowry death, etc, are on the increase. You may enact as many laws as you want, this will go on increasing. You have told in para 6 of your reply:

[*English*]

On the suggestion of the National Police Commission, the 8th Finance Commission had recommended funds for creation of additional posts of women constables. The Government have accepted this and provided Rs. 4.31 crores as grant payable to the State Government for recruitment of 2153 women constables."

[*Translation*]

In the newspaper of 29th, there is a heading—'Woman tortured to death by cops'. It has been reported therein that the people who killed the women included two lady constables also. Those lady constables pulled the hair of the woman and pushed her in a well. This incident took place near Gurgaon. The post-mortem of the dead body of the woman was done in AIIMS. I want to ask two or three questions in this regard.

You may be aware that recently, in Calcutta twentieth Congress of All India Police Science was held. Mr. Vora, DIG (CID) conceded there that rape and molestation cases are increasing. But he said that our position is better than America because in America in every 13 thousand cases, 480 rape and molestation cases occur and in Japan also, 112 such cases, occur but in India the number of such cases in every 10 thousand cases is 20. Earlier, such cases used to be 5 which have now increased to 20. What is the reason of this increase?.....
(*Interruptions*)

He has suggested formation of a three-tier cell—one cell should be for the protection of women, second cell should be at district level and the third cell should feed the Home Department about the information received in this connection. I would like to know whether you are going to adopt this or not?

He also told that in rape cases, kidnapping cases and in cases of assault on

[Shri Narayan Choubey]

women, investigation should compulsorily be done by CID—not through any other police officer. Are you going to accept it or not ?

There is one more question. Recently, perhaps in Madhya Pradesh, in the presence of 15 thousand people a woman performed 'Sati'. The people witnessing applauded this act. Today when our Government is talking of entering into the 21st century, barbaric murders in the name of 'Sati' are being committed in the country.

I would, therefore, like to know when the police reached the scene of incident ? It has come to our knowledge that the police station is quite near to that place but police reached there much late which was a premeditated step. In such cases no one comes forward to give evidence with the result that no action is taken against the culprit. I would like to know as to what you are going to do in this connection ? Also, I would like to know how many cases of 'Sati' have occurred during Shri Rajiv Government's term, that is, during 1985 and 1986 how many persons have been apprehended and what punishment has been given to them ?

My colleagues have stated that out of the cases of assault on women in villages, 90 percent cases occur with the conspiracy of the zemindars. When, an Adivasi, Scheduled Caste poor man wants the land reform law to be implemented he is pressurised from all sides and is looted and the biggest punishment to him is that his women folk are molested and humiliated. What are you going to do for that ? You will not tame the landlords, I know. A little before the death of Shrimati Indira Gandhi and now also, the landlords have been taking more liberty and advantage. To protect them from the clutches of the landlords, what action are you going to take ?

Alongwith it, kindly tell us one thing more. In 1985 and 1986, how many police officers have been charged with raping women in police custody as well as outside police custody, how many of them

were arrested, suspended and how many of them have been punished ? Kindly give figures about it. Please tell us as to how many police personnel, whose duty is to protect the people, have been charged with such an offence during 1985-86.

One thing more. We have given women the status of goddess. But as Shri Sudhir Roy has stated.. (*Interruptions*) ...they are made Ministers also, Shrimati Sheila has been made a Minister I salute her. But the truth is that rull pictures of women are being displayed every where. Why is it not banned ? You have such will powers; why do you not stop it then ? Can you not appoint earnest and honest persons in the Censor Board which passes films ? You cannot see with your mother and sisters the films being produced presently. What will you do to check it ?...(*Interruptions*)

I want to say that the Government has powers under sections 249, 251 and 252. About the incident that has recently occurred, objection is raised by our colleagues on the other as to why we are referring to it ? What are the sources with us ? You have several sources. You have CBI and other Forces. Government in Kerala is yours, it will give you a factual report. What are you going to do about Kerala villages about whom Congress-I women members have also said. Shri Buta Singh, kindly give us the details of the incident.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (S. BUTA SINGH) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am grateful to Dr. Chinta Mohan for today's Calling Attention Motion. He has drawn the attention of the House and through this House, of the entire country towards a very important and basic question. Several hon Members have gone deep and have tried to know the basic cause of the atrocities and crimes being committed against women and the approach of the society as well as of the Government in this regard. This problem is inherent in our social structure and unless this social structure is changed, whatever be the number of laws; howsoever strict the punishment may be, this evil cannot be got

rid of. There are two very strong causes which have brought this evil in our society. One is the status of women in our society and other is our social structure, which has a scope for exploitation. A man with property, be it wealth or land, gets respect in the society and a person without land has no respect in today's society.

Ours is a rural oriented country. The importance of our country lies in the fact that we are an agricultural country. In this rural country, a man who has land commands respect and a man sans land is a man without respect. I remember that in 1970-71 when Shrimati Indira Gandhi tried that women i.e. daughters should get a share in their father's property, a lot of furore was created in Punjab and the people with vested interest opposed this move tooth and nail. So much so that cases were reported where even in good families, brothers had killed their sisters because otherwise they would have taken share in the land. Such surcharged feelings arose at that time. I have given you a small example.

India is a vast country. We should know it fully well that the honour and respect one gets in the society is due to the property one possesses. To a large extent, that property is in the form of land. The freedom of man is related to the land. In whichever State you may see—whether it is Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat or West Bengal—you will find that it is the root cause. The implementation of the land reforms has been very tardy. I remember that when first conference on land reforms was convened a lot of hue and cry was raised. I was looking after this issue in the Ministry of Agriculture and I read out to them the guidelines accepted by the National Development Council. The result was that a lot of protests and hue and cry were raised. The press published articles on it and said many things about it. A feeling was created as if I am going to start a new thing and it will put the country on fire. The fact is that unless we carry out land reforms vigorously and give our women their share, they are not going to be respected. The whole country should make an effort in this direction. The

Government of India cannot do it alone. Law is already there and you and Shri Indrajit Gupta have told about it. Nothing will happen unless awakening dawns upon our organisations, whether they are political organisations or social organisations. Actually they should force our society to do these things. Unless land reforms are carried out, we shall not be able to improve things.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY
(Midnapore) : The Congress Party is against it as such it is not taking place.

S. BUTA SINGH : As I have said I am making an effort through the Congress Party itself and as Dr. Chinta Mohan has said that the country needs people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Babu ji, Rabindranath Tagore and Jawahar Lal Nehru who may carry on their crusade with revolutionary zeal. Unless we change this whole system, nothing will happen. This is the same society in which a couplet was written which was derogatory against a certain section of the society :

*Dhor, ganwaar, shudra aru naari
Ye sub taran ke adhikari*]

They have been brought to this state that it has been ordained in the religion that they deserve beating. How then can things improve in the country? Unless we give respect to Shudras or women and unless we give economic facilities to them, so that they may feel self-respect, this thing cannot be removed. This is a basic thing which I have said.

Provision has been made in the new Twenty Point Programme introduced by the Government of India that land reform will be carried out vigorously and the rights of the women labour and women will be safeguarded. You have seen and I do not want to repeat it that we have brought amendments to a number of legislations. It is through the personal interest of Shri Rajiv Gandhi that cases of dowry death have been made a culpable crime. Till today cases of dowry deaths were regarded as suicide cases and not murders. He has taken a very revolutionary step. The onus of proof has been

[S. Buta Singh]

shifted to the person charged with the charge of Crumiking murder. He will have to prove that it is not a dowry death and the period has also been increased to ten years. If within ten years of marriage such an incident of unnatural death take place, it will be first regarded as death and not suicide unless it is proved otherwise. It is a very revolutionary step. I do agree that it should be implemented. But, as I had said earlier, it is the attitude of the people that they do not come forward to lodge report. You have read out here an example of DIG of Orissa. I welcome it and I would try that his suggestions are implemented by including them in the national programme so that we may be able to provide protection to women in the country. Though I do not want to go into figures but the figures I have given, show that the situation is very critical and we shall have to take some action in this respect. Leaders like Rajiv Gandhi are preparing the country to enter the 21st century and if we do not do anything and such scourge is there in the society, we cannot make progress. I would, therefore, request the whole House and all the political parties—because they have the resources and their appeal has influence on the people—to rise above party considerations and adopt humanitarian attitude, so that we may be able to provide protection to our mothers and sisters i.e. all women folk. It will be a great service to the nation and I take it with this sense. You have raised other issues also and have referred to some cases. We must praise those States where good work has been done.

I would like to say on behalf of the Home Ministry in particular such things which cannot be left only to the law and order machinery. In many cases it has been found that when the cases are reported, the names of those very persons of law enforcing agencies are mentioned who are responsible for enforcing law and order. Whenever they are involved, they must be punished. I have no figures with me separately to show how many policemen are involved in it. I would get the information from the States. But I would say that wherever the involvement of

Policemen is found, it has a bad effect on the society. If some person commits crime that is a different thing but if a person commits crime who is responsible for maintaining law and order it will be a serious thing on his part. It has a bad effect on the society and the people are demoralised. Such things should be taken seriously. I would even say that he should be sacked from the service forthwith. Not only this, most stringent action should be taken against him. It will have good effect on the society.

Shri Choubey has just now expressed his views. I have me the figures of criminal cases. The figures of cases of dowry deaths reported in 1986 pertaining to Delhi and India are with me. I have given all this to you. I can tell you the number of dowry deaths, rape cases and eve-teasing cases. These have been given in separate columns. I have got the details to show how many cases have been reported, how many persons have been convicted and how many have been arrested.

Shri Mohan and Shri Indrajit have mentioned 3 to 4 cases which happened in some districts and villages. I have come to know that they are *sub judice*. I do not agree with the hon. Members that we should say here something on them.

[English]

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Sir, action should taken against the police...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Mr. Kurup, you cannot intervene in the middle. Let him finish his speech.

S. BUTA SINGH : Definitely kurupji, I will convey the feelings and observations of the hon. members to the State Government and I will also see that proper action is taken in that case. Similarly, regarding Shrimati Prāhmavati, I have been informed that this is a case relating to the State Government of Haryana. It has taken place there.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : I want to get a clarification.

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER : If you go on asking questions and if the Minister goes on answering them, how can it go on ?

S. BUTA SINGH : I would like to submit that we cannot go beyond the information that has been supplied to me by the State Governments. Wherever we feel that the State Government is not taking stern action, we can definitely get in touch with the State Government and we can always tell them to take sternest action.

There is also a suggestion from Shri Narayan Choubey for having a three-tier system of having a state level cell, district level cell and coordination monitoring cell. I have already promised that we are going to have it. This is what we require. We always try to put up a set-up and after that we try to forget all about it. There must be vigorous monitoring and action must be taken against those who are found guilty and those who are found wanting. They must be dealt with sternly. Then only, there can be proper functioning.

These are various aspects which the hon. members have brought to highlight during the discussion.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : You have not said anything about 'Sati'.

S. BUTA SINGH : I am sorry that I do not have the figures available with me readily about 'Sati'. This is a case pertaining to Madhya Pradesh. I have myself noticed it in the papers. We will get the information from the State Government. Again, this 'Sati' is a thing which has to be tackled at the level of the society itself.

[*Translation*]

Such institutions have been flourishing in our country.

[*English*]

For ages they have been there. The Central and State Governments are very

very vilant about such cases, but where thousands and thousands of people get together and such a thing happens, I am sorry no explanation can be given for such a thing. The State Government must act; and there should not be any laxity in such cases, and stern action must be taken against those who indulge in such heinous crimes. *Sati* is not to be respected; *sati* has been condemned. It has been banned by law, and we must see to it that nobody indulges in this kind of an activity. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Can you supply some figures about the number of arrests and prosecutions and all that, during this period ? You have given other figures. You have not given any figures about the action taken : how many policemen have been arrested...

[*Translation*]

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Kindly make a statement regarding police.

[*English*]

S. BUTA SINGH : I think in the statement... Anyway, I will get the information from the State Government definitely, and pass it on to the House because here, the information with me does not contain information about the involvement of the policemen as such. In case hon. Members are keen, I can have the information from the State Government, and pass it on.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN : Sixtytwo young girls were raped in Soudi Arabia; I want to know what action Government has taken in this regard. Sixtytwo young girls from Kerala were taken to Soudi Arabia, and there, they were gang-raped by the Saudi Arabians. What is the action that Government proposes to take in this regard ?

S. BUTA SINGH : I am collecting information.