

Israelis have developed a technology of transferring nitrogen fixing genes from the bacteria that is found in the nodules of these legumes to the bacteria generally harboured by other plants, particularly cereals like wheat. With this technology we can easily fix nitrogen from the atmosphere.

MR. SPEAKER: Please conclude now.

SHRI D. D. DESAI: I shall continue tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: You must conclude now. I have been waiting for you to finish your speech. But now you say you will continue tomorrow. No. Please conclude your speech now, in two minutes.

SHRI D. D. DESAI: Sir, I will finish in two minutes. We should not heavily depend on Naptha and Gas. We should not depend on imported rock phosphate and sulphur. We should develop our Udaipur, Maldiva Phosphates and sulphur from pyrites. Our fertilizer plants are incurring losses. But the Gujarat State Fertilizer Plant is making bumper profits. You can ask the Gujarat State Fertilizer Plant people to see as to how we can make profits in Fertilizer Corporation of India and other fertilizer plants.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: Perhaps you know the reasons.

SHRI D. D. DESAI: I know some of the reasons. The various reasons stated by the people need not necessarily be true. You can examine them yourself.

We have got fairly good performance from IPCL. But there was a delay of 5 years. We should see that we go ahead with the Olefin and Downstream projects and see that they are put up expeditiously. The Olefin Project is expected to be completed by October 1977. I am sure that they will not defer it further. I have got a fairly long statement to make about the Downstream Projects. Because I do not have time, I am cutting out that also.

Coming to drugs, I should say that FDA Rules are known to you. They had to throw sweetners into the sea. They had to ban drugs like Thalidomide. In our country we have large number of drugs which may not give us the expected performance. Therefore, there is no means to know which of the drugs have efficacy and which are fake. Of course, it does not fall under your Ministry. But its manufacture comes under your charge. The Health Ministry has to control it, but you can kindly organise this. The so-called vitamins are not necessarily vitamins. The so-called protein and other things also should be checked up. There are no patents in Italy. In France, the Supermarket tried non-branded goods and found that the cost had gone down by 30 per cent. Therefore, we can do away with brands and patents in medicines and the like. All these titanic talks about the deteriorating standards of medicines are not necessarily valid.

Then, there are common diseases and common medicines...

MR. SPEAKER: We shall now take up the half-an-hour discussion. Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan.

18.06 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

COMMITTEE ON STATUS OF WOMEN

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN (Coimbatore): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this discussion arises out of the reply given to a question as to what recommendations of the Committee on Status of Women are being implemented. The reply was, "The recommendations which have been implemented or are being implemented are as under..." It is a vague statement. One does not know which recommendations have been implemented already, which are being implemented and which are likely to be

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implemented shortly. For instance, one of the recommendations that he claims as being implemented is the enactment of Equal Remuneration Act providing for equal pay for equal work passed in 1976. Everyone knows that the Act was passed, but the point is, how far has that Act been implemented, what machinery has been set up by the Labour Ministry and what coordination is there between his Ministry and the Labour Ministry to see that this Act is implemented. We have any amount of legislation but the rub comes in their implementation.

Over and again there have been various disputes that have come up. For instance, regarding the construction workers in Tamilnadu. To avoid the implementation, the PWD themselves gave notices to all women workers and they are out of employment. What is being done to safeguard the employment of women while the Act is being implemented? How far is the statutory obligation placed under the Act such as setting up a machinery to monitor the implementation of the Act being fulfilled? About that also, Parliament should get a report from time to time. That is what I had hoped we would get from the Minister by way of reply but we were disappointed.

The next is about the development of programmes for vocational training which he states are being implemented in close relationship with industries and resources located in the area. Here I want to know whether the Ministry has gone into the fact that the working women have asked that their vocational training should be what is known as 'in training', i.e., the training should be given during working hours. The employers should give them leave during working hours to undergo this training, because women have to work and run the home also. The men workers are given vocational training outside the

working hours. They can do it. Instead of going to the tea shop, smoking a bidi and gossiping with fellow men workers, they can undergo the training. But women cannot do it because they have to go home, cook the dinner and do other household chores. Is the ministry seeing to it that the interests of the working women are safeguarded in this manner because they are also housewives and mothers looking after their families? This is very important. It is this lack of vocational training that prevents women from being appointed to higher skilled jobs. They are kept in the lower skilled jobs because they are not being given the training required, as industry is reaching more and more sophisticated levels.

When this matter was discussed in the House, we were given an assurance of which I see no mention in this reply. It is not given as one of the recommendations being implemented. I refer to the question of registration of marriages. It is a very important recommendation which the committee made to give protection against what we call brain drain marriages, i.e., people coming here from abroad and picking up the women to be their domestic servants abroad. So many heart-rending cases are there. It was meant not only as a protection against brain drain marriages but also as a protection against young girls being exposed to all kinds of malpractices in the marriage market in this country. And that is why the Committee on Status of Women have said that "the ultimate object should be to recognise registration as the sole and conclusive proof of marriage irrespective of the religious rites under which it was solemnised. It may be mentioned here that India has neither signed nor ratified the United Nations Convention on consent to marriage, minimum age for marriage and registration of marriage. We regret that for over a decade no attempt has been made to introduce legislation to implement the objectives of the UN

Convention. This attitude indicates casualness and lack of concern on matters affecting the status of women". By the way that casualness is reflected in the answer given to the question. "And we recommend that registration should be made compulsory for all marriages. We have a clear precedent for a uniform measure in the Registration of Births and Deaths Act."

A categorical assurance has been given on the floor of the House and I would like to know from the Minister how far his personal confabulations with his colleague, the Minister of Law have progressed in this regard. Because when that assurance has been given, we would like to know how soon you are going to implement it because there is nothing here in the statement to indicate it. As far as Parliament is concerned, there is no legislation before us on this particular question which we were assured when we were discussing the amendment to the Hindu Marriage Act. Therefore, I would like to know from the Minister how far ahead we are with that.

Next comes the sore question of education where again we have got very generalised sort of reply. This Ministry also seems to be obsessed with family planning like the previous Government because a whole lot of recommendations refer to that. I am not against it, but I think one should have a balance on this matter and I do not want to go into that. But what I would like to know is, as regards education—what is being done about the recommendation which the Committee has given in regard to that age group of 15 to 25 where it says:

"The large majority of them are illiterate or semi-illiterate."

This is a very revealing figure for our country. We should really be very alive to this and I think we should have a far more dynamic ap-

proach than the approach that is indicated in the statement that was laid on the Table of the House. It says:

"Out of every 100 women in the age group of 15 to 25 about 7 are in some educational institutions, about 18 are drop-outs from the system and 75 are illiterate and if national plans for development had to make any headway then it is imperative to increase the social effectiveness of this most significant group of young women even if we cannot do so far the still illiterate group".

There I do not agree with the Committee because I think it is never too old to learn as we know from many speeches we hear in Parliament, even from ex-Professors who claim to have been victimised. So I would like the Minister to let us know exactly what is being done about this because what is being said here is very very general—developing a system of part-time education for those who cannot attend schools. But this refers to the age groups of 6—11 and 11—14. Not a word is said about this more important age group because those are the mothers who are going to bring up your future generation, who will be responsible for the children as they grow up and who will be responsible for helping to avoid all the pitfalls that we have seen in other countries where the youth have got out of hand and where drug addiction is growing and there are so many other problems. We talk of the generation gap. Obviously, if this vital age group is going to be illiterate, the generation gap is going to widen and widen, and we are going to have social problems which, then, would be of our own making because we are neglecting this very important factor, and also ignoring the recommendations that this committee has made. This committee has gone thoroughly into the proposition.

Maybe the Minister is not in a position to say something to us. I do

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not want to hear again this oft-heard argument about 30 years and so on. Let us start off from where we are. I want to know what is the perspective which the Minister is holding out before us.

At the end they say that a whole lot of other Ministries are concerned. What is the coordination between the various Ministries? In the process of coordination, what are they doing about having some democratic processes, so that they consult the concerned organisation and not leave everything, just saying, "voluntary organisations are very important, we will help them and let them help us and let them do what they can." What is the role of government? Government has to see that a policy is evolved and that that policy is implemented; and also to see that the basis for that implementation is created, and machinery is set up in order to see that the policy is implemented. This is totally missing from the reply that was given.

Lastly, I would like to know how government proposes to associate various organizations that exist in the country, the trade unions amongst the agricultural workers and the women organizations, with the work to be carried out. Some times all the bureaucrats get into a huddle and prepare a plan; and then the Minister is not very wise, because they are not really very much interested in the equality of women. Unless and until the problem of women is given special attention, unless and until we have a real and complete emancipation of women, this country cannot progress. It is not only a question of how many factories you build; and it is not only a question of agriculture. It is a question of your seeing that women are given the same opportunities in terms of employment, whether in the rural or urban sector—which does not exist to-day. For instance in the employment exchanges, women are discriminated against at the time of giving

jobs to workers. I can cite many examples; but I do not want to go into them. I want to make a positive proposition; viz. that basically the question of emancipation of women is also a socio-economic problem. Unless and until that is understood, and you do not think beyond the rights of women merely in terms of their marriage, divorce and dowry, no progress can be made. People talk about dowry, marriage etc. But that is a very narrow attitude.

Gandhiji himself said that unless women played their part fully, side by side with men and unless he was sure that he had a larger number of women in his army, he was not prepared to go in for the civil disobedience movement—because he was not sure of his success otherwise. He was sure about the courage, vitality and talent of women. He felt that only when they can go forward to shoulder the tasks before the nation and fight for national liberation. Has this Ministry any idea of setting up a national committee which would be constantly monitoring the actions taken by the government, and monitoring the implementation of the various legislations that are there for protecting the status of women? This is the crux of the matter. When you have restored democracy, as you claim to have done, you should also strengthen, build up and extend the democratic procedures and processes, so that you get the fullest cooperation and also tap on the widest talent, in order to overcome this problem which is dogging our country for so many years. For 150 years we were under foreign domination. Various prejudices, social contradictions and social conflicts have come up. Even now there are some women who say: "How can a man do cooking? How can he look after the baby?" This is a peculiar and backward concept. Women have to get out of this. Women and men alike have to fight and shoulder all responsibilities together. To achieve the fullest emancipation of women—without which we cannot:

have the emancipation of the people at large.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN (Cananore): I feel that if the recommendations made by this Committee on the Status of Women have to be properly implemented, some institutional guarantee should be there that the Government will be able to do that. I think that is the main thing which is lacking, because so many Ministries like the Labour Ministry, the Finance Ministry, the Education Ministry and other Ministries are concerned, with this problem of implementing the recommendations of the Committee. In this connection, there was a proposal made in this House during the International Women's Year that a Committee with the Prime Minister as Chairman should be constituted. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether that Committee is functioning and, if so, what it has done.

Secondly, to ensure equal pay for equal work, we have adopted a legislation where certain committees are recommended to ensure that the provisions are implemented. There are provisions for setting up Committees for ensuring the implementation of the Act. I would like to know whether those Committees are functioning. For instance, under the Act if 30 women are working in a factory, certain facilities are to be offered to them. So, the employer will always employ only 29 women and thus scuttle the provision. I want to know how the Ministry is going to overcome this.

Finally, I want to know whether the Ministry will consider a proposal to set up a high-power commission on women with statutory powers so that that commission independently, under the guidance of the Ministry of Education, will ensure the implementation by co-ordinating the activities of the various Ministries and will come forward with a proposal.

SHRI K. LOKKAPPA (Tunkur): Sir, before I put a question I will give a little background.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN: Perhaps he will start from the Vedic era!

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: In the Vedic times there was equality between men and women. In fact, God was called Ardhanareeswara. It is only when Manu came into the scene that there was a certain servitude and discrimination between men and women and slavery started. We do not want that to continue in this modern age. We want the women to be freed from the shackles of slavery during the International Women's Year....

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA (Chikballpur): For one year we had suffered!

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: So far as the implementation of the recommendations of this Committee is concerned, nothing has been done. It is a socio-economic and political problem, so far as the status of women in society is concerned. There should be equality of status for women in society so that we can create an atmosphere of complete understanding, harmony and the absence of discrimination. If we go to the rural parts, what facilities have we provided to ensure that women will enjoy equal rights. Have we provided them more employment and equal treatment with men, at least in the International Women's Year? No jobs have been guaranteed in India in public or other undertakings. Certain job opportunities should have been provided, but even that has not been done. Statistics show that in ten years the number of working women has come down from 13 to 5.2 lakhs. Our women are capable of understanding, capable of discharging their duties. They are diligent and efficient, but all that we find is that when persons become Ministers, their wives are appointed to committees which go on discussing

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and deliberating, but there is no implementation.

I do not cast any aspersion on our Prime Minister, but in a fit of perversity or so he might have made certain remarks against women.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not mention it now. He has apologised for it.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: Of course, he has apologised. I have great respect for him. I think he has realised his mistake, he has stated that women should be respected.

If this Janata Government has got any respect for women, I want to know categorically what they are going to do to raise the social, economic and political status of women.

There are large number of unemployed girls. In the rural areas, equal wages for equal work is not being implemented. The symptom of slavery is visible. Therefore, I would like to know categorically at what point of time this Ministry will solve this basic problem and what guidelines they are going to issue.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE (DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER): While I share with the hon. Members the concern that they have felt for women, I do not agree with Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan that my answer has been casual. In fact, I can count the pages of the answer. The paper which was laid on the Table in type script contained five pages. There were 25 entries in it. If further details had been added, the answer would have been as long as the report itself. That was the problem. If Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan wanted what are called "particulars" in legal terminology, I could have given the fuller answer.

Even what I am going to say may not satisfy her. I cannot help it because her own question, which is the basis for starting this discussion, does not contain the particulars. So, I will try to give the answer as best as I can.

With regard to this Equal Remuneration Act, we find that a certain machinery has been set up. In the first place, there is the Advisory Committee. Such Advisory Committees have been set up in some of the States. As you know, this Act was intended in respect of certain kinds of employment. I think there are 18 employment items in the list. Then advisory committees in respect of some of the items mentioned in the list, had been set up and they consist, by and large, of a large number of women. So, they can advise the respective State Governments to do the needful. I find that Andhra Pradesh has set up advisory committees in respect of a large number of industries. Then Assam, Bihar, J&K, Kerala, Punjab and Delhi Administration have also set up committees for all the industries notified by the Central Government. Some State Governments have informed the Central Government that they are considering the question of appointing advisory committees and others have said that the need for appointing advisory committees does not arise at present as the employment notified, so far did not exist in the State in any substantial manner.

The inspectors are appointed under the Act and they will look after the provisions of the Act and try to find out whether the provisions are implemented or not. The State Governments and Union territories which have appointed these inspectors and various other authorities are Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tripura, Delhi, Goa, Daman & Diu and Pondicherry. The Central Government has already appointed these authorities.

With regard to complaints which the Central Government receives in connection with non-implementation of the provisios of this Act, I find that uptil now 27 complaints have been received, 20 of them have been sent to the States and 7 to the Chief Labour Commissioner of the Central Government. Apart from this, questionnaires are sent from time to time to State Governments and Union territories regarding the implementation of the Act.

As regards vocational training of women, we are all aware that vocational training is a different process. In fact, steps are being taken in different fields. The State Governments are doing that. If she wants to have the figures, I am not in a position to supply the actual figures. If proper notice is given, figures can be collected. So far as appointments by the State Governments are concerned, here also I am unable to supply any figures.

As regards the registration of marriages, we know that Hindu Marriage Act has made registration optional. Formerly there was no provision of registration. So far as Special Marriage Act is concerned, registration is compulsory and that is being done. In respect of marriages involving other communities particularly minority communities, it is difficult to take steps. Whether we should interfere in communal question or not, I do not know and that has to be judged very carefully. That is so far as registration of marriages is concerned.

With regard to the education of women, I concede that this is a very sore problem and has to be tackled quickly. There is no double opinion with regard to that. We have discussed the problem of adult education and adult women education is also a difficult problem. I should say, a more difficult problem, because very often, in our country, adult women do not come out of their family or, even if they come out of their family, it is not

possible for them to go to any particular school or to an unknown teacher for getting education. So, we are thinking of non-formal education of different types.

As I said in reply to the debate on Education budget, the efforts are being made to utilise mass media of communication, like, radio and television and, in certain areas, the non-formal education is being imparted through such mass media. We have the satellite programme also. One of the objectives of the satellite programme is to make the mass communication easier. This is no doubt costly. I quite admit that. But we have to keep pace with the technological developments and, taking advantage of the technological developments, it may be easier for us to reach women in their homes.

In addition to that, we have the functional literacy programme in certain areas where specially the functional literacy is imparted at the instance of the Social Welfare Ministry to adult women.

About the coordination, you will appreciate that the whole matter is rather complicated. In the list of instances of implementation that I have given, you will find that the State Governments are involved. Certainly, the Social Welfare Ministry is the coordinating body and, in the first place, it is trying to have the coordination with different Ministries of the Central Government. To that extent, we have been able to make some headway. But when there is a case of getting things done by the State Government, we can only give some lead and we can only make a request. We cannot compel them because some of these matters come within the scope of the State Government and we know the Constitutional limitations in this behalf. That is so far as coordination is concerned.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPAN: What about our suggestions?

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: I am coming to these points, one after another. I have covered four important points.

Regarding the employment of women, I have already indicated that this also is a very important and difficult problem. Even all men are not employed. The rate of unemployment is growing. There is a lot of educated unemployment in the country. In fact, when Mrs. Indira Gandhi came to power, there were about 40 lakhs of unemployed persons who were registered with the employment exchange. But when she was made to quit power, there are more than 1,07,00,000 unemployed persons registered with the employment exchanges. That is the position. So, there is a sharp rise in unemployment. Therefore, I would say that about 50 per cent of our people who consist of women will certainly face that problem.

This is a question which is connected with the general economic development of the country. The Janata Party has taken upon itself the task of generating more employment through opening up of various forms of village industries and small-scale industries. All these matters are being considered by the Planning Commission for the purpose of Sixth Plan. Before we reach that stage, it is not possible to give any assurance about increasing the employment potential of women, not to speak of men.

Now, as regards the National Committee it is true that the National Committee was set up in 1975. It took some time to do the useful preliminary work. But in February 1976, it met and decided that in October 1976 the meeting will be held. The Chairman of the Committee was the then Prime Minister. (*Interruptions*) When the new committee was constituted, the then Prime Minister was asked for a date for convening

the meeting. She never agreed. This is the position. (*Interruptions*) Former Prime Minister. I am speaking of October 1976. Now the position is that we have approached our Prime Minister, Shri Morarji Desai whether he would agree to be the Chairman of the Committee as before; and he is considering the matter. As soon as I get a clearance from him, we will consider what can be done about it. That is all I have to say so far as the different points which have been raised by the hon. Members are concerned. In conclusion, I say that I share the great concern of the hon. Members for women. I want that women should have a better deal, but how to do that. The problem is linked with general economic improvement in our country, and unless we are able to do that, possibly we cannot make much headway. But before I conclude, I should say from my own experience that I have found often women are cruel to women, not the men-folk. So, they also must change their attitude. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN: He did not answer the question in regard to the setting up of a statutory commission of women to coordinate the work of various Ministries, which he himself said it is otherwise difficult. I would like to know whether that proposal will be considered.

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: The committee itself has not been functioning. Let us try to find out whether it is possible to get this committee function. Then we will consider it.

MR. SPEAKER: We shall adjourn now.

18.43 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, July 7, 1977|Asadha 16, 1899 (Saka)