

[English]

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY (Jagatsinghpur): Sir, the Minister in his reply has stated that our research institutes have developed 20 types of implements and equipment during the last three years and he has also given a list. I want to know how far these implements are in demand among the cultivators. Has the Government got any information on this aspect? Secondly, on which implements is the demand increasing? Is the Government giving any subsidy on those implements which are in demand so that there will be more and more demand for such implements among the cultivators?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: The demand is ever increasing. New entrepreneurs and small artisans are coming up to make these equipment and implements which are in great demand. As regards the subsidy that we are giving, I will give the details to the hon. Member.

[Translation]

### Devdasi System

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\*402. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA:  
SHRIMATI PRATIBHA DEVISINGH PATIL:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Committee was constituted by the Government to carry out a study regarding Devdasis in Southern and Western parts of the country;

(b) if so, the number of Devdasis, State-wise;

(c) the details of recommendations of the Committee regarding rehabilitation of Devdasis and to emancipate them from exploitation; and

(d) the reaction of the Government to the recommendations?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT) (SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESHWARI): (a) to (d). A *Statement* is laid on the Table of the House.

### STATEMENT

- (a) The Central Government constituted a Central Advisory Committee to study the problems of child prostitution, which *inter-alia* also examined the problems of Devdasis;
- (b) While the Committee did not carry out a survey of the number of Devdasis, secondary sources indicate that they are found largely in the States of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. In six districts of Karnataka, where the practice of Devdasis is largely prevalent, it was estimated that in 1991-92 there were approx 21,000 Devdasis. A survey in 1986 had indicated that there were 16,300 Jogins in Andhra Pradesh. But the number of other categories of

Devdasis such as Venkatsanis and Basavis etc., who are found in Andhra Pradesh, Kamataka and Maharashtra is not known.

- (c) The Central Advisory Committee has recommended that (i) the concerned State Governments should frame necessary rules for the implementation of Devdasis Prohibition Acts, prevalent in the States as well as review the implementation of these Acts; (ii) in order to develop a better understanding of the practice and facilitate integrated developmental responses to the problem, it was necessary to comprehensively study the various aspects of the problem including the factors responsible for dedication, socio-economic profiles of the various categories of Devdasis, spread and magnitude of the problem etc. (iii) each State Government should draw up a comprehensive time bound Plan of Action wherein economic rehabilitation measures should be taken by State level Organisations as well as NGOs under various schemes of the Central and State Governments. Each State Government should also set up a suitable Implementation Machinery which would affect coordination as well as ensure that a large number of economic and non-economic developmental inputs are dovetailed to Devdasis and children, with adequate care being taken to provide proper marketing linkages to support their economic development activities.

- (d) The Central Government has considered these recommendations positively and requested

the concerned States to take appropriate action.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA (Chandauli): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the House will agree to the fact that 'Devdasi' system is a social evil and a taint on the country. But even then the Government is unaware of the number of Devdasis in various such States where the Devdasi system is still prevalent. It reflect the Government's indifferent attitude towards them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my direct question to the hon. Minister is that whether the Government has formulated any solid programme to eradicate the 'Devdasi' system. If so, the yearwise achievements after its implementation.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: As regards your saying that we have to go ahead.... (*Interruptions*)....

[*English*]

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: This system was prevalent ever since the Vijaynagar Dynasty ruled that area. I came to know this from history, when I was the Minister for Social Welfare in Kamataka. To cater to the needs of the Army camps, this system was introduced. It is localised. Only in a few districts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, the Devdasi system is still prevalent. In Kamataka, it is called either Devdasi or Basavi, in Andhra Pradesh it is know as Jogin or Venkatasani and Maharashtra it is known as Devdasi.

Old women in order to generate income, offer young girls, ageing between 12 to 18 years in the name of God. Due

to ignorance, illiteracy, lack of awareness, superstition, they offer girls for exploitation.

As regards the question of the hon. Member, we have taken various measures to eradicate this system. The State Governments are having their own laws and those are under implementation. We have taken up a lot of rehabilitation programmes for those women who are in distress and also rehabilitated their children.

Sir, these are the actions which we have taken. If you want me to answer the question in details, I will reply State-wise. In one of the litigations regarding child prostitution, the Supreme Court observed that a study on the Devdasi System should be conducted. We have studied the system at length and various States have enacted their laws and have also taken various measures apart from what we have taken.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ANAND RATAN MAURYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has given a very casual answer to my question even then through you I would like to ask a second supplementary question about the number of voluntary organisations contributing and working for the rehabilitation of the Devdasis in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Which are these voluntary organisations? Whether any aid is given by the centre to those voluntary organisations and if so, the yearwise details of these?

[*English*]

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: Sir, we did not make a through survey of the system, but we are going to do

it as early as possible. A secondary organisation known as Ardi have conducted a survey and has submitted its report. In that report, it is stated that 23,000 Devdasis are existing in Karnataka and in Andhra Pradesh it is 16,300. Regarding the detailed rehabilitation programme, as far as Karnataka is concerned, they are distributing land to these ladies. *Pattas*, Janata houses and house sites are also being distributed to women.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA: I had asked about the voluntary organisations working for their rehabilitation and no reply has been given regarding that.

[*English*]

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: Only one organisation has submitted the reports on the survey of the Devdasi system. We have not surveyed it....(*Interruption*).

Sir, he was asking it.

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. member has asked for the information specially about Maharashtra as to how many Government institutions are involved in this work, at present. I do not have that information readily available with me as to how many Government institutions are working in different States and what aid these are getting from the States. I will collect information and send to the hon. member.

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA DEVISINGH PATIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether I can raise one or two supplementary questions?

MR. SPEAKER: Only one.

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA DEVISINGH PATIL: I am dividing my question into two parts. It has been stated in the Part(D) reply of my question that.

*[English]*

"The Central Government has considered these recommendations positively and requested the concerned States to take appropriate action".

*[Translation]*

The word positively used here means that this responsibility has been left on the State Governments and the State Governments have been asked to do this work.

*[English]*

That has been left to the State Government. It only an advisory type of thing that the Central Government has done. They have only advised the State Governments to take up appropriate action. What is the central Government going to do about it? That is what we wanted to know.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Devdasi system is very old and many reports have been prepared and discussions held on it by the thinkers in our country as well as in abroad, several laws have been passed in this regard. I do not think that there is a need to deliberate further

on it. This system being run in the name of religion, Gods and Goddesses is very unfortunate and hateful. We are master in doing ill deeds in the name of religion and God. We take the refuge of religion in committing human sacrifice, in making one a prostitute or doing atrocities by declaring someone as untouchable. Thousands and lakhs of innocent lives are being ruined by it. It is a very serious thing. Therefore both the preventive and curative measures must be taken. I would like to know if the Central Government would do something positive in this regard and some special schools like the Kendriya Vidyalayas or the Navodaya Vidhyalayas with hostel facility would be set up for the little girls to be made Devdasis, where they could be given vocational training so that they are not compelled to succumb this reprehensible practice.

*[English]*

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: We have taken various measures in this regard. The Department of Women and Child Development has sanctioned two projects under the NORAD Scheme to the Western Maharashtra Development Corporation. In the project sanctioned, 85 Devdasis were given one year training in knitting. We have allocated Rs. 11,30,000 to this Corporation for these projects. The same organisation was given a project for watch assembly training for 100 women for one year. Apart from that, the Government of Maharashtra has given financial assistance of Rs. 10,000 for the marriage of Devdasis or their daughters.

MR. SPEAKER: The main question is, what kind of assistance the Government of India is giving to eradicate this evil from the society.

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: That is what I have replied to, Sir. Two projects have been sanctioned under the NORAD Scheme to the Western Maharashtra Development Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER: These are the two projects but not the programme or the policy of the Government.

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: These are the two programme, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: All right, you may please reply in your own fashion.

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA DEVISINGH PATIL: Sir, I have specifically asked as to whether there is going to be some educational institution, like the Kendriya Vidyalaya, Navodya Schools or ITI. Can we have such a scheme for the girls who are really in misery?

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: I think the hon. Member is right in saying that basically this is an issue which should be tackled by spreading awareness about the reprehensible practice that it is and for that it is the general awareness in society, including women, which will help eradicate this evil. In this respect, efforts are being made by the State Governments, because they have to do it in the field, and the Central Government has helped the State Government by giving training programme so as to give economic empowerment to those families whose members have been involved in this so that they are able to stand on their own legs. This will help in reducing the impact of Devdasi and other system.

I would like to mention here that it may not be a one-sided approach to the problem. It has to be a holistic approach to the problem, both on the

part of the social organisation and the State Government and the Central Government is prepared to help the State Government to the fullest extent possible to carry out this responsibility with efficiency and proper planning.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, spreading awareness is one thing but taking up a socio-economic programme is the most important thing. Whatever efforts have been made so far are quite inadequate. There will not be any result until both the State and the Central Government jointly take up a socio-economic programme. Will the Government consider giving some aid to the children of these Devdasis who are sent to school?

Will the Government consider giving some aid to the mothers of these children so that they can send their children to the schools, girl children especially, as they are kept there because of economic difficulties? If they are given special grants for sending their girl children to schools, then there would be some good result. If you do not think on those lines, if land is given and no money is given, they will not be able to cultivate that land. These things should be taken up in a comprehensive way. Will you please consider these aspects?

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: We have already considered that, Madam. In Karnataka several schools have been started for the rehabilitation of such children. Lumpsum grants are also being given to them. The grant given for the children in the primary standard is Rs. 40 and in the middle school they are given grants to the extent of Rs. 60 to Rs. 120. They have also started short stay homes and Juvenile home in Karnataka.

In Maharashtra pensions are given along with sites for those women who have grown old. In Belgaum, the Kamataka Government have given Janata houses and other things for 384 families. Andhra Pradesh Government, I think, have even given Rs. 250 as stipend for the students who come from their families. These are all actions which have been taken by the various State Governments apart from distributing sites. Other socio-economic programmes and schemes are also being implemented.

*[Translation]*

SHRIMATI BHAVNA CHIKHLIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now the hon. Minister has said that a committee has been set up to study of the plight of the Devdasis. You know about the committees. Everyone knows about the action taken report on the J.P.C.'s report. Does the Government contemplate to enact a stern law in this regard as in the case of the terrorists TADA is imposed? Often the minor girls are abducted and molested. Does the Government contemplate to adopt stern measures to stop it?

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Hon'ble Speaker Sir, whatever has been said by the hon. Member, must be pondered over. It is already under consideration. It is under consideration to make the Immoral Traffic Act more effective and stringent. Taking all these things into consideration the Bill will be amended.

*[English]*

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: Sir, the Minister was quite right in saying that a holistic approach has to be taken so far as rehabilitation of these artistes is concerned. Now, it is clear that the misuse of this system comes out of

the feudal outlook about who are performing-artistes and who, therefore, have to go outside the domestic sphere and are considered to be easily available.

And, secondly, the reason is their economic situation the poverty-stricken background from which these girls come. Now, what I want to ask is that there are other women artistes of this kind, rural and folk artistes in particular, who are undergoing the same kind of social and sexual exploitation in many different States. Therefore, I would like to ask the Minister whether any broader scheme for the upliftment or to prevent the exploitation of such women artistes, particularly in the rural areas, will be undertaken by the Government.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Sir, this is a wider question of the general situation that might be affecting the folk artistes, specially the women artistes. I do not think it falls squarely within the scope of this system which we are discussing. But, since it is a matter which also has some relevance to women artistes, their exploitation, we will try to think of a way in which this can be prevented and if special efforts are to be taken, we will try to see that those are taken.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura): Sir, in the Statement that has been placed on the Table of the House, in 'C', there are some recommendations such as Central Advisory Committee has recommended that: (1) the concerned State Government should frame necessary rules for the implementation of Devdasis Prohibition Act prevalent in the States as well as review the implementation of this Act.

Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister which are the State Governments which have framed the

rules and which are the State Governments which have reviewed the State of affairs with the implementation of the Act and what steps are being taken by the Central Government to monitor that.

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI:

Sir, the State of Karnataka had framed the rules first. The States of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have to review it.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:

Have they reviewed it?

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI:

We have asked them to review it.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:

You have asked them to review it but they have not yet reviewed it.

[Translation]

### Crop Insurance Scheme

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\*403 SHRI LALL BABU RAI:  
DR. LAXMINARAYAN  
PANDEYA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) when the new Pilot Crop Insurance Scheme has been implemented in the country;

(b) the names of States where it is being implemented at present;

(c) whether the present Scheme will cover only a few farmer and crops by considering Tel...

(d) the steps proposed to benefit all the farmers equally;

(e) whether the Government propose to enhance the amount of Crop Insurance Scheme for the flood-prone, drought-prone and earthquake-prone areas;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Pilot Crop Insurance Scheme (PCIS) has not been implemented in the country;

(b) to (g). Does not arise.

[Translation]

SHRI LALL BABU RAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now the hon. Minister has stated in his reply that question does not arise.

Indian is an agricultural country where 75 to 80 per cent people depend on agriculture. Around 26 crore people put hard labour in agriculture. But farmers in this country always suffer hardships due to floods, famine, earthquakes and other calamities which destroy their crops.

MR. SPEAKER: Reply to the question will not come if you make speech here.

SHRI LALL BABU RAI: I come to the main question. Hon Minister says himself to be a farmer and their well wisher. When the crops are destroyed,