

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill further to amend the Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is :

"That clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title stand part of the Bill."

The Motion was adopted.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

17.40 hrs.

CONSTITUTION (EIGHTY-FIRST AMENDMENT) BILL

(Insertion of new articles 330A and 332A)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : Sir, I beg to move :

"That a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India, be taken into consideration."

This is a special day in the history of our country ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (AJMER) : I am on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER : Please tell the rule.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Sir, I welcome it but I have to get some information.

MR. SPEAKER : If I allow you, I will have to allow others also.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Sir, the Government should accept it but it has not figured in the Supplementary list.

MR. SPEAKER : It has figured in the original list of business. Therefore, there is no need of supplementary list.

[English]

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : I repeat it. This is a special day in the history of our country. Perhaps, it is the first time in the history of our country or of our world that any legislature of the country is taking up a Bill to provide reservations for women in the Parliament.

[Translation]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (CALCUTTA SOUTH): No, such a provision is already there in South Africa.

[English]

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : Personally, I feel very proud today to associate myself with this Bill which is intended to bring about a provision to reserve one-third membership for women in the Lok Sabha and in our legislatures.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (BARAMATI) : Including Goa.

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : As I move this Constitution Amendment Bill, I recall with happiness the promise given to our countrymen by our beloved Prime Minister and by the United Front who have formed this Government. For years together, people talked about giving representation to women in the legislatures. This discussion is held from the highest pedestal possible, yet no political party, no Government really showed any concern for giving this representation to women. We are redeeming our promise. As mentioned in the Common Minimum Programme of the United Front Government, we are putting forward this Bill for consideration in this very first session.

The women *Shakti* is well-known ... *(Interruptions)* *Nari Shakti, Mahila Shakti* is well-known. This country's culture is based on worship of woman.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR) : Also Draupadi ... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

KUMARI UMA BHARATI (KHAJURAHO) : On one hand we talk of the world and on the other hand, we are making a fun of it.

[English]

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : We worship our mothers. Women has a special place in our culture.

We worship Mother Goddess. We worship Mother India. That itself shows the respect that our countrymen have for women. In fact, what is reflected in this particular Bill is this very spirit which worships the womanhood in our country.

Sir, for ages, we kept women in some sort of a bondage. We did not allow them to come to the public life. We closed for them the doors of all our legislatures, all our institutions.

However, the new wind which swept this country during the last General Elections has brought about this revolution in the thinking of the politicians and the political parties. This Bill, however—I must inform this House and I must also admit—is not very comprehensive as it should have been. It takes into consideration, the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies. However, representation to women in the Rajya Sabha and the Legislative Councils in our respective States has not provided for in this Bill.

The National Capital of Delhi also is not included in this Bill. In addition, Autonomous Districts and Councils in the North-eastern region who elect their councils on the basis of adult franchise, also have not been taken care of insofar as the representation to women is concerned. I would not say that that is a lacuna. But I feel, what we require is that this representation is provided not only in the Lok Sabha but probably in all other institutions. However, I would call that this is a first step towards providing representation to women in all our elected bodies. This Bill, as the Constitution requires, will require the support of the majority of the Members and I do hope ...

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (HOWRAH) : Provisions have already been made first in the Panchayats and Nagarpalikas. Kindly inform.

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : I am aware of it ... (Interruptions)

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Why has Delhi not been included? ... (Interruptions)

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Mr. Law Minister, with due respect may I inform you, that was the beginning of women participation in grass-root democracy by a constitutional amendment. It was opposed by many parties, that is a different issue.

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : I am not contesting your contention, my dear friend.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : You have made a wrong statement.

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : I have not made a wrong statement ... (Interruptions) ... What I am saying is, insofar as the legislatures—Lok Sabha and

Assemblies—are concerned, this is the first step. So far as the total electorate bodies are concerned, the first step was already taken.

And probably the first step was taken not by an amendment of the Constitution. In Karnataka, I am informed, the first step was taken much before that, by providing representation to women in the local bodies there. Therefore, different States have taken their first step at different occasions.

This step which has been taken, is a very important step. It deserves support of the entire House and with this hope that this Constitution amendment will be passed, I commend this Constitution (Eighty-First Amendment) Bill, 1996 for the consideration of this House.

MR. SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India, be taken into consideration."

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (SOUTH DELHI) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Eighty-First Constitution Amendment Bill has been put up by the hon'ble Law Minister in the House for discussion. I rise to heartily support this Bill on behalf of my party. Before I start the discussion, I, on behalf of all women of India would like to thank you. I am very grateful to you because it is only due to your enthusiastic role that this Bill could possibly be passed today. It is a normal practice that Parliament passes the Bills but there are certain Bills which become milestones. Such Bills change the life-style of a particular section of society. The 73rd, 74th and 81st Constitution Amendment Bills will come in the category of such Bills which have become milestones. The 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Bills brought a revolutionary change in the life of women which provide 33 per cent reservation for women in Municipal Corporations, Municipalities and Gram Panchayats. The 81st Constitution Amendment Bill is going to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of the States.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been written in the objectives and reasons of this Bill that all leading political parties have given their consent to bring this Bill. I, therefore, would like to thank the leaders of all political parties for this. As far as the Bhartiya Janta Party is concerned, such a thinking had been there for a long time but two years back, in 1994, we included it in our national agenda. The national convention of our Party was held in Vadodara. Our national party President himself had demanded there that women should be given 33 per cent reservation in Parliament and in the Legislative Assemblies of the States. In our country, very few motions are moved by the Speaker because discussion is not held on such motions and these are passed without any

discussion. It was an historic day when the BJP brought this issue on its national agenda. Afterwards, this issue became the main point of our election manifesto. You may remember that though, BJP Government could run only for 13 days but at that time, in the message of the Prime Minister to the nation telecast on Doordarshan, some issues were raised and the main issue was that if our Government lasted long, we would provide 33 per cent reservation to women. After that, we prepared President's Address. If we go through the highlights of President's Address, we would find that it was the main highlight of the Address. We, through the President, made a commitment that we would provide 33 per cent reservation for women. Besides this, last Friday, our hon'ble leader Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee who is also the Leader of Opposition, brought a Private Bill in the House in which there was a proposal for providing 33 per cent reservation for women. This is a logical conclusion of thoughts for me and this Bill has been brought through this logical conclusion. I heartily welcome this Bill but there is a question as to why it has become necessary to introduce this Bill? After all, India is a leading country. What is the number of such progressive countries where women had to struggle for getting the right to vote from the time of the constitution came into force? In some of the countries, women got the right to vote just a few years back. In the big and progressive countries, it has been said that women should be given the right to vote only after attaining the age of 30 years whereas men are entitled to vote in the age of 21 years. But our country is one of those leading countries where women have got the right to vote from the very day, the Constitution came into force. India is among those countries where a woman has had the privilege of heading the Government not only for one or two years but for 11 years. But it is unfortunate that on the one hand a woman has been the Prime Minister and on the other hand, participation of common women in politics has been negligible. Who is responsible for that? If I say without any hesitation, the male dominated mentality is responsible for this discrimination. I would like to submit that this discrimination exists in every political system and that is why it become necessary to provide reservation for women. Had men given this right to women easily it would not have become necessary to bring this Bill today. But it is very unfortunate and a matter of shame that there has been a progressive decrease in the political representation of women from the Independence till today.

What is proportion of male and female Members of the House, you are presiding today? The House comprises of 543 Members of Parliament out of which there are only 36 lady Members. If you calculate, it stands at six and half per cent. I would like to ask as to whether it is not a matter of surprise, sorrow and shame that women comprise fifty per cent population and enjoy only

six and half per cent political participation? May I ask whether the capability of leadership is only men's paternal property? Whether only men have monopoly to rule? ... (Interruptions). I have stated myself. If you have heard, I have stated that the mentality of male domination is present in every party without exception. Perhaps, you did not hear it. I am saying so because all are equally guilty. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Domination is taking place even in the House

...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : They are exhibiting the same mentality ... (Interruptions) you are confirming my point ... (Interruptions). The obvious needs no evidence. It is the mentality of male domination which is completing them to speak. I did not take my party as an exception. I said that the mentality of male domination is present in every party. That is why need for demanding reservation was felt. Had you provided our due earlier, who would have demanded for reservation and why? I would like to ask ... (Interruptions)

[English]

DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA (GUWAHATI) : Sir, it is an insulting remark. This should be expunged from the proceedings ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Let her have her say.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was stating ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Sushmaji, passage of this Bill needs their help also. Therefore, refrain yourself from speaking too much.

...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : It would be better if they pass the Bill accepting the truth and facing the reality. We are not asking for mercy ... (Interruptions) I really feel that woman has awakened for her right. Therefore the need of introduction of this Bill is being felt today. But I, through you, would like to state that the capability of leadership is not parental property of men only. So far as abilities and capabilities are concerned, women do not lag behind men. Let me tell them that God, in His vast creation, did not create only man and woman but innumerable creatures and has created female of every male. Being male you can state by putting restriction on us that physically and mentally you are weak since God has given you power of speech and wisdom but the other creatures made by God behave as per the qualities provided by nature to them. The males of their species cannot say anything. Therefore, if you study the females of other creatures, you will find that females are neither physically weak nor lack the capability of leadership.

18.00 hrs.

God has created lion—the king of the forest but it is lioness which goes for daily prey. It is lioness which trains her cubs for prey and God, through her, has should that females, in no way even physically are weaker.

Mr. Speaker, Sir you hail from Meghalaya where elephants are in abundance. If you visit the sanctuary of Assam, you can have glimpse of herds of elephants since the elephants are always found in herds. You can check it any time that the herds of elephants are never led by male elephant instead it is led by old female elephant. God has provided her the capability of leadership, therefore the female elephant takes the charge of leadership. It is lioness which preys. Females of these creatures, are neither physically weak nor lack leadership capability; their males could not have their control over them. Therefore, she behaves as per the qualities and capabilities provided to her by nature. Here, it is said that we are physically and mentally weak.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (SILCHAR) : The female elephant never grows old.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the male elephant never grows old. There is no fixed age of male elephant. So it never grows old. They show only quality which is gifted to them by nature.

Not only this, I would like to state that as per Hindu mythology when portfolios were distributed among Gods, Goddesses were given important portfolios to run them properly. Defence, Finance and Education are three important departments of any administration. The Gods while distributing portfolios had given the portfolio of education to Goddess Saraswati, Finance to Goddess Laxmi and Defence to Goddess Durga. All the three important portfolios were given to women. Therefore, the administration of these departments was run properly. This Government has made one State Minister for 33 per cent women. It is, therefore, that this Government is in such a bad condition.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Therefore, you should utter 'Sita's Jai' instead of 'Ram's Jai'.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : I was mentioning these points to show that women are neither physically weak nor mentally but the mentality of our society has created this perverted thinking. It is the result of perverted thinking of the society that we are demanding our right today and after noticing the intention of the House, it is not clear whether even after your enthusiastic contribution, this Bill will be passed since it is a Constitution Amendment Bill which requires 50 per cent presence and 2/3 members present and voting. At present I do not think that there will be 50 per cent MPs and if the rumor which I heard in Central Hall and Lobby is true then a conspiracy is being hatched to ensure that

50 per cent Members are not present in the House at the time of voting. If 50 per cent presence is not ensured in the House, that conspiracy will be busted which is in the air. Discussion was going on outside the House on 73rd and 74th Amendment about which, we were saying to be a revolutionary step. They were saying : What will they do; Why they need reservation ? See the women members who have been elected through 73rd Amendment. They sit veiled; Their husbands work for them. Brijwasi bhai was saying that it has made 'Pia' a P.A. I asked why is it strange ? He said women sit veiled. I asked whether all the male Members of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies are good speakers? How effectively they play their roles in the House ? Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to repeat what I said, to him, "since purdah practice is prevalent in women only, therefore, she has become speechless in her veils but those members who do not speak in the House are dumb without veils. But nobody pays attention to them but the women who out of 500 women adopts veils as per the old tradition, is made a thing of show. You have experienced by giving them opportunity that women Chairman of municipalities and mayor of municipal corporations are working more effectively and at some places they symbolise the progress. They are doing better work as Chairman of municipalities, mayor of municipal corporations and surpanch of Gram Panchayats. A large number of women have won the election. If in the same process, this Bill is passed, one third women Members will be there in the Parliament as well as in the State Assemblies.

Such comments are being made which apparently appear to support the Bill but their results are quite contrary. For example some one says, why 33 per cent, it should be 50 per cent. I say, we would be satisfied with 33 per cent only. We did not demand for 50 per cent. The second logic is that—we support the Bill but the Bill should be comprehensive and unless a comprehensive Bill is brought, we would not support the Bill. I know that there are shortcomings in the Bill. For example there is provision of reservation in only Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies and not in Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils. But I do admit that no Bill is perfect in one effort. The Constitution was framed after the discussion of years. We have made many Amendments for making it more relevant and feasible. This is 81st Amendment. We would make it feasible and more effective later on if need be. But this Bill should be passed today in the present form because it is a historical beginning.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you ordered from the Chair that you have not only suspended the Question Hour but you would waive the rule also but this Bill should be introduced and passed today itself. The historical beginning that you have initiated from the Chair will have its logical conclusion with the passage of the Bill. This Bill must be passed. We have two hours time for

discussion. You should direct the leaders of all the political parties to issue instructions to all the Members to be present here. At least 50 per cent Members should be present here. This would make Members present and voting two third. This historic Bill should be passed here today itself, so that this day could be celebrated as Women Day. I would like to make an appeal to the leaders of all the political parties to support this Bill. I thank you for allowing me to speak and conclude.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (DUMDUM) : Why do you not mobilise all your 190 MPs ? ... (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : All our MPs would come ... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. GIRIJA VYAS (UDAIPUR) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I join Shrimati Sushma Swaraj and thank you for initiating this historic step which would tell the whole world that even today Indian keep women in high esteem. I thank you not only on behalf of this House and the country but on behalf of the women of this world. In the end of her statement Sushmaji had mentioned a point but I would like to present it in the beginning. Right now I cannot say that what were my feelings when I wrote these lines—

Abhi tewar kahan badla hai inka,
abhi to dour inkalab ka hai,
Abhi bhi sehra hai, tapish baki hai,
Abhi mausam kahan gulab ka.

18.09 hrs.

(SHRI P.M. SAYEED in the Chair)

In the morning we were happy that this Bill would be passed within ten minutes without any discussion but things took such a turn and an element of doubt crept out from some hidden corner of somebody's mind and we the women MPs passed the whole day amidst tension. But in spite of that tension I thank you for taking up this issue before 6'o clock which was the prescribed time for discussion on it.

In 1920, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in 'Harijan' that independence cannot be called complete till the first and the last person of the line gets equal rights. I do not know about the number of women standing in that line at that time. Women took active part in freedom struggle on the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Our country became independent. When we talk to the women of that time they say that it was their dream to have a strong hold in political arena after independence. But we did not get

that share even after 50 years of independence. Today we have come here to get a 33 per cent reservation for ourselves.

So far as the question of political parties is concerned I would like to say something about my party. After Mahatma Gandhi, I found that sensitivity towards women in Rajiv Gandhiji. He understood that our democratic structure would not be complete until and unless women are given economic, social and political rights. Our democratic system which is popular throughout the world would not be as popular without doing so. Therefore bills on Panchayat and Municipality introduced in this House. Though these were not passed during his life time but previous Government passed these bills and it was a milestone in Indian history. Just now the incident of Ropkanwar had been mentioned. I would like to say that foreign media had been projecting such incidents of sati and child marriage in an exaggerated manner to shatter our country's image. But now we would be able to say that India is the only country where women have been given 33 per cent representation in the Parliament.

Just now I mentioned history. I do not want to put the political parties into trouble and in an embarrassing position but the truth about women's representation in various political parties would come out if we go through the details of the previous election results. I would also like to say that all the political parties should make an introspection to find out the number of women given tickets for Legislative Assembly elections for Uttar Pradesh and Kashmir as one phase of it has been completed so far. We would have not raised this issue here if the matter was settled there itself. As hon. Speaker has also mentioned, I accept the fact that presently 6 or 6½ per cent women are here and we cannot pass this Bill without your support. I thank you for your political will power as this Bill had been defeated twice and now it has been brought for the third time. It is correct that this Bill could have been brought again with your support otherwise percentage of women is quite less in both the Houses. Sir, through you, I request you all to bring back that spirit to show that our culture is not discriminatory to women. We have not only said 'yatra naryastu piyante' but implemented it also. After independence many paradoxes have been crept and it seems we have become accustomed to that. On one hand we accept Indiraji as a wise and intelligent woman who was a successful politician and ruled this country for such a long time but on the other hand reality is quite different. It was the sensitivity of Rajiv Gandhi which brought in to light this fact. Just now Sushma Swarajji has said that in spite of this attitude of people, cultural heritage why this Bill for 33 per cent representation has been brought here. In this context I remember one story—once Greek came under the grip of famine. Priests said that the country would get rid of this problem only after sacrifice

of the most beautiful girl of the ... After a long search the girl was found. Her name was ... was 13 years old. Affignia was taken to the place of oblation amidst chanting of religious mantras. Priests were saying that she was fortunate for the country and religion and asked for her last desire. She was told that temples and alters would be set up in her name and people would worship her. On reaching near the oblation place she turned and said that her last desire was that in near future women should not be treated like a commodity. With this she died. I feel that in place of Affignia if there were Sita, Droupadi, Ahilya, Fatiza or Mariam, they would have also said the same thing that women should be given equal status. How far women would be treated like a commodity and show-piece for the drawing rooms and would be thrown in the garbage bag whenever they want to get rid of them.

Sir, not only in India but position of women is not sound throughout the world. Even the developed country like France has given six per cent representation to women. In England it is 10 $\frac{1}{4}$, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 11 per cent. Even the situation in U.S.A. is also not very smooth. Today the attention of the whole world is focussed on India because they would be able to raise this demand in their respective countries if this Bill is passed in India. We are not raising an extra-ordinary demand. Our brethrens have asked for 50 per cent representation. We do not oppose it but initiatives should be taken in this regard. If after five or six years you find that this 33 per cent representation of women is playing an effective role in building the country then this suo moto representation of 50 per cent should be given to women. We would not demand for that.

Sir, certain questions regarding women's role in Panchayats and Nagarpalika have become a subject of discussion today. In this context I would like to say that womenfolk of villages are saying that they could bear the responsibility of their homes as well they can play their roles in Panchayats. They can play both the roles efficiently. Women have capability to look after their homes as well as discharge their political responsibility. It is possible that one or two women might have been named in corruption cases due to politics but it is a known fact that women can be successful and can stand up against corruption in the government.

Sir, just now I heard a voice that from where the able women would be found. I would like to say that you will not have to search the garbage bag. One of our brothers has said that there is an apprehension regarding leadership of women. I would like to say that it is enough and through this House I would like to tell the women that we belong to the same class whether one is educated, illiterate, rich, poor, beautiful or ugly. It is the responsibility of educated women to bring our sisters to

the forefront who have been left behind. They should ... so that we could reach to their aspirations.

Sir, I do not want to go into details of historical facts. I come from Mewar and I would like to say that if the role of women is excluded from the history of Mewar, there would be no significance of it. Whether it is the role of Parnavati, Padmavati, Meera, Panna, or Razia Begum, those women characters of history had been an inspiration. Women have played an important and significant role in the history of India.

Tomorrow's India and the twenty-first century wait the dawn of the era when women relegated to the background for far too long will step forward. Just now I was talking about paradoxes whenever speeches are delivered we claim that we gave the post of Prime Minister to a woman. We offered the post of Governor to a woman right in the beginning. We have given the post of Chief Minister in many a states to women but if we introspect, we'll come to know that .1% women had the access to the coveted position at the time when women had assumed a leading role.

Last time, Mr. Speaker had kindly granted us one hour's time. I am referring to the discussion we had on the status of women. Mr. Speaker, Sir, until our mentality changes, the crimes against women can not be curbed. Till the time change is not initiated at the administrative level, and tolerance is not there, the atrocities on women will continue to be committed whether on Roop Kanwar of Rajasthan, on a Naseema-bi or some other woman. I would like to thank the Prime Minister for this historic step of pursuing the idea of Hon'ble Speaker and for recommending the introduction and passing of the bill at the same time. I would also like to thank Shri Somnath Chatterjee. Infact we are preparing a list. When we will have full control over the administration, we will especially pay attention to those who are helping us. If we want to put an end to injustice and the atrocities committed on women ... (Interruptions)

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (SILCHAR) : Whose names figure in your hit list ?

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : We are keeping a close watch. If injustice is to be put to an end, it is imperative to have reservation for women. Women face a hard time when contesting elections. So we do realise that reservation would lower our stature somewhat because we would like to come here after surmounting the hard challenges.

We were silenced and relegated to the background during these 50 years of Independence to which we can only say that "*Band hathon ko tha sabab koi, waqt aaya hai hum bhi bolenge.*" You can not suppress our voice, push us to the background and impose your decisions upon us any longer.

Once again I would like to draw attention towards your intent. We have inherited a culture wherein women used to be worshipped. As Sushmaji had pointed out just now that the gods too had given all the key posts to women. I want to remind you that you are the nurturer of that very culture. You should do away with your biased attitude. We would like to join the Parliament and State Assemblies as your colleagues and not as your adversaries. Mr Speaker, Sir, I won't take much time, as today is truly a historic day ... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : You ask the United Front Government to distribute three portfolios to the women. ... (Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER : To all the ladies.

[Translation]

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Certainly. I feel that Shrimati Kanti Singh should have some female colleagues. We feel sorry when we see her sitting alone ... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Why the Coal Minister, Shrimati Kanti Singh should not be elevated to the Cabinet by taking into consideration the spirit of the House ?

[Translation]

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : I began my speech by quoting Gandhiji. I would like to have vocal support of our male colleagues in this matter. At the time of achieving salvation, Mahatma Buddha was told that he was fit to achieve salvation. At this, Buddha, like Asiginia asked whether all the living beings in this world are going to achieve salvation. When he got a negative reply he said that he too did not want salvation. You should also announce like Buddha that you are unable to bear this burden alone and that you want the co-operation of women. You wielded power in Parliament and State Assemblies and put the blame on us. Now this reservation won't remain restricted to just 33 per cent but would be 50 per cent in the coming time. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been suppressed for too long but now the times have changed.

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (ALLAHABAD) : Do you believe in all the teachings of Buddha.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Yes, I do.

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Are you aware of the situation prevalent in 'Dharma Sangha' of Buddha ... (Interruptions)

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Hinduism never went against Buddha. It was not said that there would have been women in Dharma Sangha. Lord Buddha accorded women their due place in religion.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Lord Buddha never made any discrimination. I had quoted Buddha from this point of view only. He had said that if salvation is not conferred on all the living being, he too would not accept it. All that you have to say is that so long as the participation of women is not ensured, you would not be a part of such administrative machinery. Even this much support would suffice. We have been suppressed for far too long and our voices can not be suppressed any longer. I also want to say that :

[English]

"We are not big banyan trees. We are lush green bushes. More you cut, more we grow."

[Translation]

So do not try to cut us down. Give us your co-operation. I have full faith that the spirit with which you passed the Panchayat and Nagarpalika Bill that expressed your good intention and showed that you are a nurturer of our great culture, would be displayed once again in the unanimous passage of this Bill. I thank you for introducing this Bill and for having given us the opportunity to speak on it.

[English]

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (PANSKURA) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak.

First of all, let me also thank the Speaker, the Leaders of all the political parties here and the Members. I hope all of them will remain here till voting.

On this historic day, I start with paying my respect to those men who have fought for women. We shall never forget Ram Mohan Roy who was the first person to raise his finger against burning of *Satis*. We shall never forget Vidyasagar who fought for widow re-marriage and also spreading education amongst women. How can we forget what Rabindranath Tagore said in Bengali :

"nanke apan bhagya
jay karibar kena na
dile adhikar he bidhata"

"God, why did not give women the possibility of winning their own fate ?"

Can we forget Surya Sen who sent *kutlatabad* with this clean understanding that a woman must lay down her life because that is how women of the whole country will come to the freedom struggle ? Can we forget

Jyotiba Phule who, in Maharashtra, fought for women's rights forthrightly? Can we forget Subramanya Bharathi who, as a famous Tamil poet, fought for women's rights? Since the time is limited, I cannot take the name of all because in our country there have been plethora of people. The name of Mahatma Gandhi need not be mentioned because that is obvious.

Sir, since I am a Communist, please do not mind, I cannot but recall on this occasion that it is this theory which was applied by Lenin, that women must be relieved of double burden. The society must take some of their burden. They have to look after their children. The society must give them that possibility of crech, kindergarten etc., so that they can give the society sufficient strength to put it into practice. I am not saying only about Lenin because, as I said in the very beginning, we should remain really grateful to our forerunners among whom many were men and of course women were also there. I would say that unless you fight for your own right, it becomes ultimately difficult to implement it, even if good laws are passed.

Now Sir, a question has arisen that if one-third representation is given in the Parliament and the Legislative Assembly, will there be enough capable women? This argument is, of course, sometimes taken recourse to by those who want to keep others suppressed. This argument was used against our freedom struggle by the then British imperialists. We rejected that and today also we reject that not only out of theory but from the experience.

Let me tell you that when one-third reservation in Panchayats was being implemented in West Bengal—I am glad that ours was one of the first Governments which put this into practice—this question arose, whether there will be enough women for Panchayats. After all with one-third reservation for women, how many women will be there? Only 150. Remember that 25,000 women were found for Panchayats.

Let me also tell you that our experience shows that most of the women there are no less conscientious, sometimes more conscientious than their counterparts. Why? Because they are coming for the first time. It is a very big thing. All of us must understand this that they have come for the first time. From my experience, I must tell you that at one place, there were floods and some relief came, but the relief was not enough. There were many representatives, both men and women and at every place where I went, I found that the women Panchayat Representatives were the first to grab the relief items for their constituencies. This was a universal experience, believe me. That is why I am saying that ultimately this fear will be baseless.

I hope my brothers will also help us in this. Let me tell you that this measure will not only benefit women but it will also benefit all the political parties.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (VISAKHAPATNAM) :
How?

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Let me tell you how. You must have heard the name of Kazi Nazrul Islam. He is one of the best revolutionary poets of Bengal.

He said in Bengali :

"Konokale eka hoini keo joyi,
purusher tarobari prerona diyechhe,
shokti diyechhe vijoyolokhi nari.

Never did the swords of men alone become victorious; it is women who gave them inspiration and strength to them. This is true. It was written by Kazi Nazrul Islam long long back.

You just look at our own history. Please tell me, did any one struggle succeed where women did not come in a big way? Did the freedom struggle succeed without women's participation? No. You remember as to who banished the foreign clothes—it is women, who did it. Did the working class movement succeed without the mobilisation of the wives of workers? Did the kisan movement succeed without the mobilisation of the wives of kisans and *mazdoors*? That is what happened in Razakar movement, Telangana movement and all others. Therefore, let it be very clear that if we want to do something to our country, we should make half the population participate directly in that and unless we do that our strength will remain reduced to that extent. It is not without reason that we fight when atrocities are perpetrated on women because we feel that it will weaken not only women but also the country as a whole. Therefore, this particular reservation of one-third, I am sure, will strengthen the whole country, not only women but also the whole country. Now that this Bill is being passed and there is a long time to the next elections. What is the difficulty in finding women candidates? Please go and find out. Moreover, let me tell you that not only the political activists can be candidates but also there are eminent women in different fields, who also can be brought into this. You will get a new entry point. Let me tell you that today a large number of people have become somewhat disgusted about politics. I believe that this particular move will reverse the situation. Our whole new lot of people, who have not been forthcoming earlier, will enter now.

This is a historic Bill and today it will be passed. It will be history not only for our country but for the whole world, for which India will have the claim of the whole world and it will fight back in all our struggles, be it our struggle for sovereignty, be it our economic development or be it our social development.

I hope that all of us will support this Bill. I request all the Parties to ask their Members, wherever they may be, to come and be present here at the time of voting to fulfill the requisite numbers.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (PUDUKKOTTAI) : Sir, I welcome this Bill. It is, of course, a historic day and that I should suggest only one thing on this occasion.

The hon. Law Minister, while introducing this Bill, said that this Bill is not of a comprehensive nature because reservations have not been allotted to women in the Upper House. But I have got something else to say also. The hon. Member from the Opposition, Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, while participating, said that it is a male dominated society.

But she has forgotten one thing that in spite of this House being a male dominated House, it is prepared to bring such a Bill to give due recognition and rights to the women. Of course, along with that, I should say that rights and freedom should not be given and taken, but it should be fought and got.

Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee, our experienced colleague, has said that many things have not succeeded in the past without the help of women. I should make it more clear that nothing in this world would get succeed without the participation of women. Just because we accept that, we have come forward to introduce this Bill.

I would like to say that this has been for ages here in this nation as the hon. Minister of Law rightly pointed out that we worship Goddess; we call the river as mother river; we call this nation as mother India; and we call the language which we speak as mother tongue. So, we have given all the due respect and due regard which you deserve without any claim. Likewise, we have come forward to give proper reservations in the Parliament as well as in the Legislatures.

I would like to point out that we from Tamil Nadu have always hailed women. There is no discrimination or differentiation between men and women. We have always believed and followed this Policy in our State. As Bharathiar from our soil has said and I quote :

"ANNIRKU PENN INGU SARINIGAR SAMAM KAAAN."

It means the women are no way inferior to men.

In Tamil Nadu, our leader, Shri M. Kalaigarn Karunanidhi, when he was the Chief Minister earlier in 1989 has enacted a law that women would have equal property rights in the ancestral properties also. Now, reservations have given to women in the local body elections. So, in all respects, we support this Bill. I am afraid that a time may come when you may give reservations to us. The manner in which some lady Members spoke here seemed as if they are thinking of

the age of conservatives. Those generations are over. A new era has arose which demotes nobody for any reason. We give all respects ; we give all regards; and we give all rights.

Here my humble submission to the hon. Minister of Law, through you, is that if the Bill is to be comprehensive in nature, reservations should be given to the backward community also. This is my firm insistence. But for that this would not be a comprehensive Bill. Even after the implementation of the Mandal Commission's recommendations, the backward communities are not given due regard in the Central Government jobs. So, if this Bill is to be comprehensive then backward classes should also be given reservations. You may give some assurance, but that assurance should not be an oral assurance as in the past like language policy which we have experienced. So, before the Bill is passed, I would like to suggest and insist that reservations for the backward community also should be given.

I welcome this Bill on behalf of my Party and on behalf of the male community with an assurance that we are always here to give you the rights which you deserve.

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT (SHAJAPUR) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the objective with which the Bill has been introduced here won't be fulfilled in its present form. In this Bill one-third posts have been reserved for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women out of the reserved seats. Please go through it and Hon'ble Minister should also clarify it ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat. He'll clarify when he gives the reply.

—(Interruptions)

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Chairman, Sir, if you go through the Bill, you will come to know that the seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Section 330 (2) are the same as given in the Section 330 (2) of that bill which have been reserved for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women. If such is the case, then it is apparent that the object of the Bill would not be achieved and in effect only six or two or three seats would be available ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please sit down. It is not so. When the Minister gives his reply, he will clarify it.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK (ASKA) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, to start with I am rather surprised because the House has to have fifty per cent of the Members to be present here to pass this Bill. But I see that all the seats of the B.J.P. and the Congress are vacant ... (Interruptions)

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : What about the ruling party?

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS) : You own side is empty.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : It includes my side.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR) : The Left Parties are present.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : The Left Parties are there ... (Interruptions) Your party seats are vacant. What is the use of making speeches here ? This will not go through at all. You do not have the requisite number of Members. How can you go through this ? ... (Interruptions) Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, where are your Members ?

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : All of them are coming.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : You have 160 Members. They should be here to get this passed ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Biju Patnaik, please address the Chair. You may kindly speak on the Bill.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : You are supporting the people. They are also supporting the people.

[Translation]

You have no leader... (Interruptions) where is your leader ... (Interruptions) The leader is sitting ahead and his followers are sitting behind ... (Interruptions)

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (KOTA) : Where is the leader of Janta Dal ... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (CHANDIGARH) : The Leader of the Opposition is sitting here. But the Leader of the House is missing. The President of the supporting party is missing. All the Central Ministers are missing. Where are all those leaders ? Where are they ? ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : May I request the hon. Member Shri Patnaik not to provoke them ? The number of Members present here is not the point. You may kindly confine yourself to the subject. Please address the Chair.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : It only shows that this Bill is not going to be passed today because we do not have the numbers. It is as simple as that. Do we have the 50 per cent present of total number of Members who are required to vote present here ? They are not here.

Anyhow, since I have stood up to speak, I will speak a few words.

We started the reservation for women. When I was in the Government in Orissa in 1991, at the Panchayati Raj level, long before this Parliament passed this Bill, we

have had it established, There, we had given one-third proportion to the women. What I want to tell you is that.

[Translation]

Wherefrom you will get woman candidates, they will not come forward ... (Interruptions) You will not get woman leaders.

[English]

The moment reservation was made, there was a parade of women claiming to be there, right from the bottom level. There were 100 women contesting for one seat. That was my experience. When I called a Panchayati Raj conference in Bhubaneswar there came 27,000 women who were all elected representatives. There were representatives from Panchayats, Nagarpalikas and Members and Vice-Chairmen etc. All of them, some 27,000 women, came. So, there will not be any dearth of women representatives once we have the system as we are proposing to do in this Bill.

The other thing is that it is true that only a few ladies are getting elected here on their own strength.

By and large, ladies are not being encouraged by men. They talk of male chauvinism or whatever you call it, it is there. Unless there is reservation for them, they will never come up. Since there is reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, they have come up. There are hundreds of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Parliament, in the Legislatures, in the Cabinet and everywhere. Therefore, they must have an opportunity to come to Parliament, to the Rajya Sabha. There are difficulties as to how you will elect Members to Rajya Sabha ... (Interruptions)

So, I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, if we have the requisite numbers, let us pass the Bill today. I think the Chair should give a call to everyone to be present here. Then only you can pass this Bill. Otherwise, you cannot pass this Bill. Thank you very much.

[Translation]

KUMARI UMA BHARATI (KHAJURAHO) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. Tomorrow, when the people all over the world will come to know through media about passing this Bill in the Indian Parliament, the people of Indian origin settled abroad will feel pride because the foreign countries consider India as a backward, conservative and orthodox country. But when for the first time we will set an ideal example before this world that we want women participation in power and for that we have brought a Bill then the entire world will welcome it and we will feel pride in saying that we are Indians.

The history of the circumstances responsible for bringing this particular Bill in this House is very old. There have been two types of waves in the society of our

country. On one hand, women have been given extreme regard in our religion and culture and on the other hand, there have been some anomalies in our history due to certain social practices and different ideologies. For example, on one hand, Lanka war had taken place for the sake of maintaining the dignity of Sita but on the other hand, when a Washerman blamed her, she had to face exile whereas Shri Ram knew that she was pious and guileless. Dropadi was given respect in the society whereas she had five husbands. But with the purpose of insulting Pandavas, Dropadi was insulted openly. There have been different sorts of anomalies in our society and even today, we can see them. During 'Navaratri', she is worshipped by making a statue of clay. Even today, all God-Goddesses are worshipped on their own days. Ramnavami and Janmashtmi occur once a year, Shivaratri falls twice a year and Navaratri also occur twice a year and that too for nine days every time i.e. there is a special provision for women having 18 days for worship in a year. But on the other hand, we read in the newspapers daily that here a woman was paraded naked and a girl was molested. The main evil in our society is that on one hand, we worship the Durga made of soil but on the other hand, enjoy in insulting them by parading the women naked.

I will not name anybody because we should not give an example of such a person who does not get an opportunity to give a clarification in the House. Two-three days back supporting the 'Miss World Beauty Contest' a Chief Minister of our country have said that Dropadi was also paraded naked and what is wrong if a woman will parade in the Beauty contest in incomplete dress? It means that the perverted thinking of parading women naked, which was prevailing five thousand years ago, is still there in our society. This Bill will definitely play an important role in removing the anomalies which are as old as our history itself is.

I am not able to stand for a long time but today I have stood up here for making a special submission. Many of the persons of our country sitting here may have an experience that in our country a girl is not provided ghee and milk. A foreign team visited India and they medically examined the women of our country. They told that the women of India lack adequate vitamins, iron and blood as compared to the women of other countries. They asked me reasons for that and I told them that to be vegetarian is not the only reason for that. Another reason is that in villages, ghee and milk of her share is given to her brother. When she becomes young, her share is taken by her husband and when she becomes old, her share is eaten by her son. It is a general concept in our society that girls are wedded away and there is no need to give them milk and ghee to eat, they can live only with air and water. They are provided old and dirty clothes. They get up early in the morning and go to their

bed at night after all the members of family have slept. I have seen in my own family that my sister-in-law (Bhabhi) works at home till noon and after that she goes to the fields to work with my brother and come back at night. Today, she might have returned from fields in the evening whereas I am sitting here in Parliament. Now, my brother might be sitting at the 'Chopai' and my sister-in-law might be preparing meal. She will take vegetable if left out otherwise she can eat chapati even with salt. She will take milk if it is spared otherwise she will satisfy herself by thinking that she can live only with air and water. This has been the position of women in our country. They have to get rid of such a situation for which this Bill has been brought in this House. I had raised this point in the morning also and people also said to me that you are a monk wearing ochrous clothes and propagating Hindutva, then why you have raised the issue of giving reservation to the women of backward classes. There is no doubt that I definitely have faith in Hindutva and consider it as a vitality of the nation. I am considered a fanatic Hindu and not only this, I am generally considered anti-muslim. Such is my image in the society.

I worked very hard during Ramjanam Bhumi Agitation. I was ready to sacrifice my life also. But I am of the view that Ramrajya could not have been established had Ram not killed Ravana. Ravana could not have been killed had Ram not eaten Sabary's used plums who belonged to backward caste and if Kowal had not helped Ram in taking him across the river in his boat and ascetics, Advasis, bears, monkeys, Angad and Hanuman would not have helped him. Because soldiers were not sent with Lord Ram from Ayodhya to win Lanka and his father-in-law Janak also did not send soldiers to help Ram to win over Ravana. He did not get any help from his father's position. Ram got help from the poor, ascetics, and backward castes to win over Ravana and I am of the view that if we want to make the Hindutva a success, we will have to make all sections of society prosperous. We will have to provide them social respect and participation in the Government. We will have to provide them all these rights altogether.

Participation in the Government will help the women in getting them proper place in the society. They will be economically uplifted and get social respect also. It can be ensured by this Bill but I would like to raise that issue today also which I had raised earlier.

In our country the women have to suffer the most. The way the backward castes and dalits are suffering, same is the case with the upper castes. But the Dalit women have to suffer both ways because of their being backward and dalit. When a woman belonging to dalit or backward caste steps out of her house she has to face the insult of being a women and that too a dalit women.

Therefore, the dalit women and the Backward class women have to suffer double and if we have to save her from these sufferings then there is only one solution i.e. to bring a Bill. After all, what are the aims and objectives of this Bill and what prompted to bring this Bill here?

I am not giving sermons. My leg is paining and I am not able to stand for a long time. I am speaking from the core of my heart. We have introduced this Bill because women comprise the weaker section of the society and we have to strengthen that section and in this regard, we shall have to consider it properly.

19.00 hrs.

What should be the position of our reservation pattern? I, therefore, request, through you, the M.Ps of all political parties present here to come forward in making provision of reservation for the women belonging to backward castes, particularly when we are bringing a special Bill in this House. If it is not done then it means that we are not sincere towards the progress of the women.

People say that when there will be allocation of seats then women of the backward castes will also have their share. Even if there is reservation for dalits and adivasi women, how many seats will be left for them? I heartily welcome reservation for women belonging to backward castes. The experience of all the political parties inspires me to fight for the rights of the backward castes. I am ready to fight and die for it. As I fought for construction of Ram Janma Bhoomi, so shall I fight for the construction of the hut of the dalit. I, therefore request the M.Ps. that if they want to bring the poor and dalit women as well as women of other classes in the mainstream of the country and to strengthen India and the 'Hindutva', then they should try to strengthen all the classes of people. This is an important Bill and I am ready to fight and die for bringing this provision in it. Therefore, we should also consider its all other aspects and should not leave any loophole so that someone could obtain a stay order against it from the court. If this Bill is passed in a hurry then there may be some problem in legal framing and in the event of a stay from the Court. This Bill may not become effective. So, due consideration should be given to this Bill in the Standing Committee. After that, this Bill can be passed by calling a special session. If you wish, you can get this Bill passed by calling a special session after 15 or 20 days so that the women of the backward castes could also get reservation. With these words, I conclude.

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, I congratulate the Government for bringing this Eighty-first Constitution (Amendment) Bill. Today morning we, the women

Members, with the help of male Members insisted upon the Government to bring this Bill today in this House. I am really grateful to all the hon. Members of this House and the hon. Speaker for helping us in this regard. First of all, I want to ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members, those who want to go out, could go and talk there. Such a serious matter is being discussed here.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : First of all, I want to congratulate all the male Members of this House because without their support it is not possible to pass this Bill. I think we should not consider ourselves only as chauvinist, we should consider ourselves as human beings. That is why I want to tell this House that there should not be any discrimination between male and female because whatever development work has been done in this country has been done by the brothers and sisters of this country. We cannot do anything alone. We could together do things better.

Sir, the female Members will, of course, plead for this Bill. But the male Members have also pleaded for this and we are grateful to all of them. That is why I must thank them before starting my speech.

Sir, once a journalist asked Indiraji, 'do you consider yourself a woman Member?' Indiraji replied that I consider myself a woman.

She said that she considers herself as a human being. Today, when the Bill giving 33 per cent reservation to women is coming, I must say that it does not mean that there should be any discrimination between men and women. This is a very important point. There is an apprehension that the male Members may lose their seats because of this 33 per cent reservation. I must tell you honestly that they should not be deprived. Women Members should get the priority, they should get the reservation because they are the weaker section of the society. What we are getting today is not an undue advantage. It is our democratic right, it is our fundamental right and it is our constitutional right. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose once said : "Nobody will give you the right, you have to snatch it." Since it is our fundamental right, we have to snatch this right.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (AHMEDABAD) : They are giving it to you.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I congratulated him first. There are only 39 female Members in this House. Sushmaji put the figures at 36; it is not 36, but 39. There are only 39 women Members from all the parties and they cannot pass this Bill without the support of our brothers—our elders and our youngsters. That is why, they deserve our congratulations.

Sir, this is not a comprehensive Bill. There are some lacunae in this Bill. We should have discussed this earlier before bringing forward this Bill in this House. There are some reservations on this among some Members. They are very genuine and I think they are very valid also. We could not discuss these things before bringing forward this Bill. We have not yet got the opportunity to discuss this. There are some lacunae in this Bill and that is one thing.

I am not going to say what the Geeta said, what the Koran said or what the Bible said. I want to tell you about the practical things. Yes, today, the value based politics are deteriorating day-by-day. To restore the value based politics, I think this is the proper time when men and women should work together and women should get the priority from grass-roots to decision making levels so that we can curb corruption, at least, to the extent of (Interruptions) one-third. He said it correctly that we can curb corruption to the extent of one-third and save the country.

If we divide the Indian History, in ancient history, we have seen the role played by Sita, Sati Savitri and Damayanti. (Interruptions) Please allow me to speak. Geetaji has said something and I have to say some other new thing. If you see the medieval history, the Moghuls have played a very important role. For example, Noorjehan, Jahanara, Roshanara, and Razia Sultana had played a very good role. If you divide the modern history into two parts, one part refers to the pre-Independence period. Then, you will see the role of Basanti Devi, wife of Deshbandu Chittaranjan Das ; you will see the role played by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. When he set up his Cabinet, there was one lady member in it. He was the first man who included Laxmi Swaminathan in his Cabinet, if I am not wrong. In our modern history, prior to Independence, we have the role played by Sarojini Naidu, Kastur Ba Gandhi, Annie Besant, Matangir Hazra from Bengal, Sister Nivedita and so many other women. They have all played a very good role. (Interruptions) Why do you disturb me ? I am a student of history.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Why do you not come to this side ?

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Is it your ruling that the lady is not protected ?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : The hon. Member is protecting me. I am grateful to you. But this running commentary should be stopped.

Prior to independence, of course, if you see the history from 1757 to 1857, you will see the role of Rani Lakshmibai, Jhansi Ki Rani.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please do not make running commentaries. Let us hear whatever she wants to say.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : After independence also, you know how Indira Gandhi played a role in her political life.

In our independence movement, many women took part for the freedom of this country (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : What is this ? what are the senior Members doing ? If the hon. Member wants to go out, he can go out.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : You are asking everybody to go.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I do not know whether everybody is taking this Bill seriously or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am appealing to the House. It is a very serious debate.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I do not disturb anybody. They should allow me to speak first. All are speaking from a political angle. I am speaking from our angle and from the point of view that we deserve congratulations today.

Even after independence also, Indira Gandhi played an important role as a woman Prime Minister in this country. Not only as a Prime Minister of this country Indira Gandhi played a role, but she was also brutally murdered. Not only that. She was the leader who led the NAM movement and who had asked for the freedom of countries like Cuba and Korea. She gave support to PLO and for SWAPO and for South African Movement and to Bangladesh and this is the 25th year of the Bangla Desh Freedom Movement. We should remember these historical facts also. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Order please. There is lot of noise in the House.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : The dream of Shri Rajiv Gandhi was very clear. After Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Shri Rajiv Gandhi was the man who was very fond of women and children specially and, under his leadership, 33 per cent reservation among the panchayats and municipalities started.

Though it is delayed, better late than never. I congratulate the Government for bringing this Bill. But there are some lacunae which I want to point out. Number one is the Law Minister is missing.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, Kumari Mamata Banerjee, you please see that the Parliamentary Affairs Minister is there who is taking notes. You please carry on.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: Who is there to take notes on behalf of the Government, the contributions made by a lady Member ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Dasmunsi, please resume your seat.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : I request the Government to take seriously the contribution made by the distinguished lady Member ... (Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : He is not ridiculing. Nobody is ridiculing ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Kumari Mamata Banerjee, please carry on.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : I expect that the Government should take it seriously and not take it very casually ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Dasmunsi, may I request you to kindly resume your seat?

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : I think the Law Minister should have been more serious to listen to the debate or he should have deputed somebody before he left the House. It is said that somebody is taking notes. Is it not a casual manner ? Previously, he was listening very seriously to all the distinguished Members.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Dasmunsi, you are a senior Member. When a Minister goes out, he is represented by the other Ministers. He is taking notes.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : I know that. Shri Jena is a good friend of ours. He is a very sincere Minister. But possibly, we are taken aback that the Law Minister is not there ... (Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : The point precisely is this. Even without taking notes, this is ingrained in our brains ... (Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I am sorry. It is a most unfortunate comment made by Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee. When I have complimented all of you, you should not comment like this.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : I am complimenting you ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Kumari Mamata Banerjee, you proceed now.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : We are listening to her very seriously. It is a very good speech ... (Interruptions) Why are you laughing ? Your own party Members are laughing. What can I do ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Will you kindly listen to her ?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I want to point one very important aspect. The proposed insertion of Article

330A is for reservation of seats for women in the House of the People. Clause (1) of Article 330A says that seats shall be reserved for women in the House of the people. In clause (3), they have mentioned as : "... allotted by rotation to different constituencies in that State or Union Territory." I am very much against this provision. If you give seats to women rotation-wise, what will happen? Suppose for five years, a particular seat is allotted to one candidate and in the next five years, another particular seat is allotted to the same candidate. In that event, where will be the credibility of that lady to work ? Why I am saying this is because every Member is responsible to give reply to the people of his/her constituency as to what work he/she has done ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : When you get your chance, you can speak. Do not make comments like this.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I have to make one point here. Will the Government accept my proposal that, one time, for six months, Shri Deve Gowda can continue as the Prime Minister but during the next six months, one lady Member from their side will continue as the Prime Minister rotation-wise ? I would like to know whether they will accept my point ... (Interruptions) Supposing I am contesting from a constituency I am liable to answer to my people. After five years, they will ask me what work I had done for the constituency. But if I change my constituency rotation-wise, from one constituency to the other constituency, then the responsibility, the credibility, the loyalty to the people will be very weak and there will be no responsibility at all. That is why, I strongly urge upon the Government that it must reconsider the aspect of rotation of seats. Otherwise, the credibility will be lost.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : What is your suggestion ?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : My suggestion is that if you are going to reserve the seat, you reserve it for ten years or fifteen years. At least, that would have some impact.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, as far as I have been able to understand, our Constitution, after the amendment, will not say that every five years it has to be rotated. That has to be done by the rules that would be framed, the law that would be framed. It will be done by the Delimitation Commission as and when it is necessary as to which seat will be made a reserved seat for women like the seats of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates.

Every time it is not changing. Therefore, there is no such apprehension. But it is a very good point that she has made. I am sure, the Government will take note of it.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I appreciate what Shri Somnath Chatterjee has said. At the same time, I would like to request the Government not to leave this rotation programme to the State Governments or the ruling party Members. You entrust this responsibility to the Election Commission and the Election Commission can impartially work out some way.

I also say that the SCs and the STs have got reservation. But we have got the OBCs and minorities. They do not have reservation. These types of people are deprived of reservation. I can tell you that in my State there is a reservation of 53 per cent for Other Backward Class people. If you go to Bihar or U.P. or Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh, you will see that the number of backward class people and minorities is more. But they do not get the opportunity. May I suggest you one thing? Why do you not consider giving this reservation to the OBCs who have already been identified including this 33 per cent? But there is a lacuna. The Mandal Commission recommended 177 cases under the OBC category. But in my State, only 29 cases are recognised by the Commission. The question is, until and unless the process is complete for other backward classes as to how many castes are recognized in each State by the Mandal Commission, it will not be over. I think, right now, the Government should give an assurance to this House that they would set up a parliamentary committee or a high-powered committee to look into this matter very seriously. Of course, you can tell me that I am pleading for the minorities for the purpose of catching the vote. It is not that. How many minorities are we having in the whole House ? The number is very few because they are deprived. That is why, my appeal to the Government is to set up a committee for the OBCs and minorities. You should assure the House that they would get the justice also. They should get their due share from the decision-making level to the grassroots level. Today we always speak hi-fi politics. Of course, we want to learn the Western culture. At the same time, we should not forget the Indian culture. By giving 33 per cent reservation, it does not mean that they are not competent, they do not know anything. Please do not think that only those having some degrees and coming from foreign countries can contest the election and come to Parliament. We want an able leadership. We want able women. We want that the women should be trained from the grassroots level. So that women who know the problems of the people, who are associated with the people, who know the problems of the grassroots level workers, such women should get the opportunity. We have seen at the panchayat level 33 per cent reservation for women. All women are not that trained. But training has started. I must say they are trained like anything.

Earlier, when we started this process, sometimes their husbands guided them. Now also, there are some

husbands who guide their wives. But I can tell you, 50 per cent women are sincere, they have started taking training and working.

Sir, I do not want to say that just to get the advantage of this Bill, only some fashion parade women, who have no relation with the politics, who have no relation with social work, who have no relation with the common people and who have no touch with the people, should come out and capture this Parliament, only to show the beauty of fashion parade. I want to alert you on this point. We want to see this Parliament to create history; our women should create a good history.

Therefore, I believe that our Parliament will be able to create that history.

With these words, I must congratulate the Government...

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : Mamataji, are you going to support the stand taken by Kumari Uma Bharati ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, I was also about to mention this.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, what I have very correctly said is that this Bill is not a comprehensive one ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : I could not follow exactly what she said.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Yes, I am clarifying.

MR. CHAIRMAN : But you may kindly address the Chair.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : As Umaji has said, I have also very categorically stated that this Bill is not a comprehensive one. There are some lacunae. If we could have discussed it earlier, we would have given this type of suggestion to you. I wanted to give notice in this regard during Zero Hour but there was no Zero Hour because of this Bill.

What I am telling is this. Regarding other backward classes and minorities, a parliamentary committee or a high powered committee should be set up by the Government ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister is seeking a clarification, whether you are inclined to sent this Bill to the Select Committee or not.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, I would like to urge upon you kindly to pass this Bill today itself. And, for reservation to other backward classes and the minorities, you set up a parliamentary or some high powered committee and within a framework of minimum time, say three or four months, the decision should be

taken. You kindly assure this House that you will give priority to the minorities and the other backward classes also. This is my humble request to you.

SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA (ROHTAK) : Sir, at least, 50 per cent reservation should be there for rural women.

[Translation]

After all 80 per cent people live in our villages.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mamataji, you please conclude now.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, they are taking my time, what to do ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : But you are also inviting troubles sometimes.

...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, I think, this point should be considered carefully by the Government.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Reservation should not be on the basis of religion ... (Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Should I speak in Hindi ? Will you understand when I speak in Hindi only? If Shri Rawat wishes, I shall speak in Hindi ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, No, you may speak in English.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : The point is very clear. There is no political point. My submission is that this Bill should be passed but there is no provision in it for reservation in Rajya Sabha, Legislative Councils as well as also for backward classes and Minorities. For this purpose, the Government will have to bring a comprehensive Bill soon.

[English]

So that the people should not feel that they are deprived.

Also, when you are giving 33 per cent reservation for women, please give priority to the grass-root level women, the rural women who are the heart of this country and the women belong to weaker sections.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You please conclude now.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : With these words, Sir, I want to quote only one *sher*.

[Translation]

Swami Vivekanand said, "Unless and Until there is awakening among the women of Hindu Society, our country will not develop."

When the Mother of the great poet Iqbal died, he wrote a couplet :

"Umra Bhar teri mohabbat meri Khidmatgar rahi,
Jab main teri khidmat karne ke kabil hua, tu chal
basi."

This shows how much he loved his mother.

[English]

Everybody loves his motherland. That is why I want to tell you not to underestimate the women. I request all the party leaders to see that all their Members are present in the House to pass this Bill. I have an apprehension that it may not be passed. This Bill will give the brightest life to women in the future. I quote Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore before I conclude :

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high"

I want that my country's flag should fly with the woman and the man together.

With these words I congratulate all the Members and I thank the Government for bringing forward this Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members, it is now 7.30 p.m. still fourteen Members are before me and the list. Some more Members also want to speak.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You do not allow anybody to speak in this House. Let me tell you that either Members will have to be brief, so that we can finish it today, or we may have to continue this tomorrow.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : I request all the speakers to be very brief.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (PONNANI) : Let us know at what time the voting will take place because this is a Constitution Amendment Bill. We are all facing a lot of inconvenience. A lot of important work was postponed yesterday because the House went on and we came forward our yesterday's work for today. But today also we are going in an indefinite manner. Let us have some idea as to when you are going to put it to vote. Otherwise we will be accused of not being present in the House and all those things. We are in a very sad situation. Important delegations come to meet us and we are not in a position to meet them. All these problems are there.

MR. CHAIRMAN : If all the Members are ready to forego their chance of speaking, we can immediately put it to vote. It is not the Chair which has to decide.

19.34 hrs.

(MR. SPEAKER in the Chair)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (MAVELIKARA) : Two hours have been allotted for the discussion on this Bill. At the end of two hours we should put it to vote. Every political

party is supporting this Bill. All the leaders have met in your Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and said that all of them will support it. Therefore, what is the need of this extended discussion? Two hours have been allotted by the hon. Speaker and the decision should stand ... *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (PATNA) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a very important Bill and all the hon. Members want to express their views on it. There are certain shortcomings in this bill and the hon. Members want to give their suggestions by highlighting them. Every member has got the right to speech. It is not proper to deprive them of their rights and in this way their right to speech can also not be withdrawn. Therefore, my request is that until the hon'ble Member completes their points, this Bill should not be passed. We all want to speak on this Bill ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please Professor, you cannot monopolise everything.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR) : We have heard what Shri Banatwalla has said. This is a Bill which every side of the House is supporting, but for reasons beyond our control the requisite number of Members are not present. So, voting can be taken up tomorrow. We can have only the voting tomorrow, immediately after the Question Hour. This is a Bill in which no risk should be taken. This is my submission. Let the discussion continue today. We can go on till ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I have one information to share with the House. The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition have a very, very important meeting to attend today, which could not be avoided. Both the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition were in my Chamber just about five minutes ago. They are going for a meeting which they could not avoid. They tried to avoid that meeting but it was not possible. I do not want to go into the details. So, the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition will not be able to be here before 8.30 p.m. Therefore, I think that we would conclude the debate today and the reply of the Minister would be at twelve o'clock tomorrow to be followed by voting straightaway.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR (MUMBAI NORTH-WEST) : Sir, would you please listen to me for a moment? The only problem is since nine o'clock there were meetings. In the morning, all of a sudden, this Bill has

come up. It has now come up for discussion. Yesterday, the Finance Bill was discussed and when the discussion ended at 9.30 p.m. in the night only three MPs were present in the House. Is it the way of functioning of Parliament? I am looking at it from this particular angle. We also have other programmes. No MP knows whether this House would continue for another three hours or four hours. This is not the way. This is not the proper method ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Thank you for saying something which I should have been saying.

...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, the House has been extended for two hours. Let us complete this and then the House can adjourn.

MR. SPEAKER : That is what I said. We will conclude at eight o'clock.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED : Sir, I have a suggestion. If the House agrees, now itself voting can take place. From our party, Members have already participated. Or, you can fix the discussion to be concluded at eight o'clock and voting to take place tomorrow. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

*SHRIMATI SANDHYA BAURI (VISHNUPUR) : Mr. Speaker Sir, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak on this historic Bill which seeks to reserve 33% seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislatures. It is a matter of regret that even after 50 years of independence women have not yet got their rightful share in our social and political set up. *(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Order please, order.

[Translation]

*SHRIMATI SANDHYA BAURI : This is quite obvious from the scenario in Parliament where out of total number of 545 Members only 39 lady Members have been able to enter this August House. The small number of ladies in the House even after 50 years of independence compel us to lose faith in the existing system. Undoubtedly women have been neglected since ages. The neglect from society and home has compelled women to be habituated to confine themselves in kitchen and in the four walls of the house. Their way of life did not provide any exposure to outside world and were forced to remain in background doing the thankless job of looking after the family. After a long struggle now they are able to get certain rights as important member of the society.

* Translation of the speech originally delivered in Bengali.

(SHRI CHITTA BASU *in the Chair*)

19.40 hrs.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Order please. Hon'ble Members are requested to see that order is restored in the House.

[Translation]

*SHRIMATI SANDHYA BAURI : I am proud to say that in my State of West Bengal women have been deeply involved in political activities since long. It is a matter of pride that two women members were nominated to Panchayat by the Government as early as 1978 when there was no provision for women to participate in such forums. Women in West Bengal have fought for their rights through the West Bengal Democratic Women Organisations also. After endless struggle and agitation today at the fag end of 20th century we have become successful to get 33% reservation.

The elections in Panchayat in my State have displayed the percentage-wise increase in the number of women candidates. In the last 4th election of Panchayat, the number of women participants has considerably increased because 33% reservation for women in Panchayat has been implemented by West Bengal Government. I am proud to say that these elected members are functioning very well. Of course at the outset they had to face certain difficulty in their work in the Panchayat due to inexperience and lack of exposure to outside world. But gradually they were able to understand their duties and are now working in a wonderful way. Our United Front Government in West Bengal deserves thanks for this revolutionary step.

It is a matter of shame that when we are going to step into 21st century, women have been facing discrimination every where. Parents do not hesitate to spent large amount of money for the education of their son. But the case is different as far as girl child is concerned. The parents with limited income will always stop the schooling of the girl though she may be very bright and continue to spend more and more money for the education of their son. This discrimination and exploitation of women is reflected in the insignificant number of women members in the highest forum of our country that is Parliament. Here we have only 39 women Members out of 545 Members. It is indeed a negligible number. When this Constitution Amendment Bill providing 33% reservation for women is passed we will have more representations of women in the House. They can highlight their own problems and various other problems of society. I have no hesitation in saying that women are more sensitive to certain issues and realisation for certain problems and thus they can highlight these issues better than their male counterparts.

* Translation of the speech originally delivered in Bengali.

I want to cite again the example of West Bengal where the women Ministers are discharging their duties very well. Women have been involved actively in our struggle for independence and various other agitations like post independence Food agitation in West Bengal. Their deep involvement and participation in Social, Cultural Political movement can never be ignored or minimised. I would also like to remind my respected male colleagues about the role played by their respective mother. It is the important role being played by their mother that they have been able to reach this height and come here, discuss various important issues and help in the legislature work. We know this reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies will definitely enhance the activities of these August Forums and the elected lady Members will contribute immensely for upliftment of society. They will play an important role in nation building and legislative work. We should also remember the women from the oppressed, the neglected, and the weaker sections of society. They should also get scope for political consciousness so that they can also come forward and become Members to highlight their problems, limitations and plight before this August House.

I again thank the United Front Government to bring this historic Bill and humbly submit to pass it tomorrow.

I thank you Sir for giving me an opportunity to speak on this important Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL (LATUR) : Sir, several lady Members have expressed their views on this Bill. I think that other male Members should also speak on it. I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this Bill. It is good that the entire ruling front have unanimous view in this regard and is supporting this Bill. It is not so that they are supporting this Bill only in the House but also they have included this item in their Manifesto and they are acting accordingly. I would like to thank leaders of all these parties.

In our country women have always been kept in high esteem. This has been proved by the fact that in this country there had been a women Prime Minister whose name has been written in golden letters in the history. This could be possible only with the help of the people of the country. Shri Nirmal Kanti sitting with me was saying that in South Asia some countries have lady Prime Ministers. Prime Minister of India had been a lady. The Prime Minister and the President of Sri Lanka are ladies. The Prime Minister of Pakistan is also a lady. The Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition of Bangladesh are also ladies. It is an important matter that so much importance has been given to women in South Asia. Had an elected government been formed in

Myanmar then obviously a lady would have also been the Prime Minister of that country. I think that the atmosphere and the way of living of this country is such that women have been given importance.

At this time, I also remember Shri Rajiv Gandhi. We know very well that many good suggestions had come during his tenure. Right to franchise was given to youth of 18 years instead of 21 years. It was also suggested to enact a law about giving reservation to women, which is at present under consideration and an Amendment Bill was also introduced. Unfortunately this Bill could not be passed in the Rajya Sabha. Therefore, after introducing this Bill and though it was not passed in Rajya Sabha, such a law was enacted in Municipal Council and district council. It was also enacted in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and many other states. But it is notable here that the women should have 30 per cent reservation in all these bodies. It was mentioned in the Amendment Bill. In that case also when a discussion was held in the House, all the male Members supported this Bill. At that time also it was told that today they are making this provision for Municipal council and District council but in future a demand would also come for reservation in Legislative Assemblies and Lok Sabha. Then also people said let it come, we shall implement it. It is a matter of happiness that utterances made at that time are being implemented now. Some people are saying it openly but there is whisper in air whether the work will be done smoothly if the women come? Even outside the House people are saying the same thing. When we got independence that time also a question was raised whether India can run this democracy? To whom these illiterate people will vote? We know very well that after independence in fifty years we might have committed some mistakes but we have run our democracy in a way better than certain other countries.

It means if the women participate in running the government then the work will go on smoothly. At one point of time I used to see, from the Chair, how Members of this House were talking. I used to say that female Members of this House very well get their work done from their male counterparts. There is no doubt that when 30 per cent women get entry into the Parliament then their performance will be the same. If we see the results of various universities as I saw in the convocation of the university at Goa, there also out of first ten 5-7 awards went to the women. I had said in that very convocation that if we give thirty per cent reservation to women in the Parliament and in the Legislative Assemblies then they will work very well. At that time my friends told me not to praise them too much. But this is proved that women are getting more awards and gold Medals in schools, colleges and universities in comparison to their male counterparts. These are received by our daughters and sisters. This can prove that they can do anything

very well. How the women work is clear from the work of the lady Prime Ministers of U.K., Sri Lanka, India and that of other countries. All the Prime Ministers have proved that they speak less and when speak then they speak to the point and also implement it with determination, whatever be the situation. So we say it would be better to give work in the hands of women. Some people say from where shall they bring such capable women. I say that there is no scarcity of women. They are at least 50 per cent of the total population. In some states they may be 55 per cent. I think the women who occupies first, second or third position in the list of universities etc. can come and do the work very well.

The Government has introduced a very good bill. I thank Mr. Khalap for his effort. It would have been better if more discussions had held on it. We have to discuss and study it deeply. We should see that this Bill is passed without any obstacle. It would not be better for the House and for us if any shortcoming is left there in passing this Bill. I think keeping this in view it has been decided that this Bill should be passed tomorrow. In my view no party has issued whip for this. If we get time we can issue whip and direct the Members to be present at the time of voting and get this Bill passed. I think no body is going to oppose this Bill. It will be passed definitely. But we should see that there should not be any technical and legal shortcomings. This question was raised here. We had passed Delhi Rent Control Act and a day or two after its passing we said that we would amend it. This is also not good. We also passed Anti Defection Bill in which there was such a provision that it would be beyond the jurisdiction of judiciary. But it was to be ratified which could not be done. Then it was decided to withdraw the Bill. I think our Law Minister, our Law Department have studied it very carefully and there would not be any shortcoming. If even then there is any shortcoming we would not face any problem in making any amendment, if necessary. Anyway, this Bill should be passed at any cost in this House and the other House also without any opposition.

[English]

SHRI C. NARAYANA SWAMY (BANGALORE NORTH) : Sir, I thank you for the opportunity you have given me to speak on this historic Bill and I compliment the Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Time is very short. As you have all heard, hon. Speaker has requested you all to complete the discussion by 8 P.M. But I feel that the discussion should continue as there are a large number of Members to speak. Therefore, I would request that every Member may take not more than five minutes to speak. Only then, we will be able to accommodate as many Members as possible.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Mr. Chairman, Sir, only five minutes are left to Eight and you are saying that discussion is to be completed upto eight o'clock.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : It will be continued.

SHRI C. NARAYANA SWAMY : Respected Sir, I compliment the Government for this historic Bill that is being supported by all sections of this august House without any reservation. We have had reservations in the local bodies, both urban and rural. Karnataka had provided for 25 per cent of reservation for women in zila parishads and mandal panchayats during 1987 and 1992. Similarly, there has been instances of reservation for women in local bodies in different States. Under Constitution (73rd Amendment), there is a provision for compulsory reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and women in these local bodies throughout the country. There is an enabling provision in 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments for reservation of people belonging to backward communities in different States. Though there is such a provision enabling the States to provide for reservation for Backward Classes in the local bodies, only very few States have come forward to provide for reservation for Backward Classes in the respective State Legislatures. I am happy to inform this august House that in Karnataka, a new provision relating to reservation for Backward Classes has been introduced wherein one-third of the seats in gram panchayats, taluk panchayats and zila panchayats has been reserved for Backward Classes and the list contains different communities coming under the Backward Classes. And within the Backward Classes, one-third of the seats have been reserved for women. I fondly and earnestly hope that in view of the opinion expressed by hon. Members in this august House, Government will initiate action to amend the Constitution before long to provide reservation for Backward Classes of various categories and alongwith that, not less than one-third of the seats coming within the Backward Classes be reserved for women under the respective categories.

There are other suggestions forthcoming during this debate relating to opportunities being given to women. Here, I have to express my views while welcoming the historic measure and provision for reservation in the local bodies. What we see around us in different States is that, while we have given reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and women, we have not given sufficient powers of administrative control to the local bodies in various States.

20.00 hrs.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is 8 o'clock now. The hon. Speaker has suggested that we should continue the debate for some time more so that all the speeches are over today. The Minister shall reply to the debate tomorrow and hence voting will take place tomorrow only. Does the House agree with the proposal ?

SOME HON. MEMBERS : Yes, Sir. We should complete all the speeches.

MR. CHAIRMAN : We shall complete all the speeches today.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (BARAMATI) : We were supposed to finish it by 8 P.M.

MR. CHAIRMAN : But there are a large number of Members who have expressed their desire to speak and the Speaker has asked us to continue the debate for some time more. The problem is, apart from Private Member's business, certain other important business is to be taken up tomorrow.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (PONNANI) : But there is no problem if it is taken up before the Private Members' Business starts.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : The problem is, it has to be passed here in this House and then go to the Rajya Sabha. The Rajya Sabha also has to pass it in a similar way ... (Interruptions)

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : We are continuously being asked to adjust our programmes. This is not fair to the Members ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : What is the view of the Government ?

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : Sir, the fact remains that after this House passes this Bill, it has to go to the Rajya Sabha and the Rajya Sabha also has to pass it. Tomorrow is the last day of the Session. Therefore, time is a big constraint. I understand that a large number of Members desires to speak on this. It is also true that a number of Members were not aware that this Bill will be taken into consideration today itself because the notice given was only for its introduction. Considering this, if some *via media* can be found out, we will be very happy. The Government and I, personally, shall be happy if the debate is over today. If it is not possible, the House can complete the discussion tomorrow.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : You should ~~continue the debate~~ tomorrow and we should be given an opportunity to speak.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Let there be no Zero Hour tomorrow.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Such things are happening every day ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think the sense of the House is to continue the debate for some time more.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : No, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Then I shall have to take the vote.

Do you agree to extend the House by another one hour ?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : We can start the discussion tomorrow at 1200 noon.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think the hon. Members have understood the difficulty of the Government. This Bill has to be passed tomorrow as early as possible. It has also to go to Rajya Sabha.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Yesterday also we were told the same thing about the Finance Bill. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : If for the Railway Budget you could sit for the whole night, why can't you sit late for this Bill also ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Tomorrow is a Private Members' day.

The view of the House was that this Constitution (Amendment) Bill be passed today. Therefore, with this constraint of time, I think we should continue for some more time so that some more hon. Members can finish their speeches.

... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : It was decided in the meeting of party leaders in Rajya Sabha that they would not be discussing the Bill in Rajya Sabha and that they would pass it. There will not be any time constraint even if we start tomorrow at 12 o'clock. You can give opportunity to speak to the Members. We can finish it in two hours and then it can go to Rajya Sabha.

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE (RATNAGIRI) : Zero Hour and lunch Hour can be done away with tomorrow ... *(Interruptions)*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : You can suspend the Question hour tomorrow ... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members, the House cannot be continued without your cooperation.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : Only two hours' time was allotted for discussion on this Bill. The House has to be adjourned now.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The sitting of the House can be extended provided the House agrees.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE : There is no consent on that. We can continue with it tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN : There can be a compromise formula. Let Shri Narayana Swamy conclude his speech today. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NITISH BHARADWAJ (JAMSHEDPUR) : Sir, let him do it provided you give us a guarantee that all Members will be allowed to speak tomorrow ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let the hon. Member complete his speech today.

SHRI C. NARAYANA SWAMY : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not wish to take much time of the House.

The Panchayati Raj Institution where we have reservation for the weaker sections including women is the leadership training ground in the country. We are not going to have reservation for women in the State Assemblies and Lok Sabha till the present term is over. I have been witnessing in many States in the country that even the representatives who have been elected to the local bodies in both rural and urban areas have not been properly trained to shoulder the responsibilities that are entrusted to them. The Constitution says that these local bodies should be given sufficient authority and powers to function as self governing-institutions. Unfortunately in many States where legislations have been passed in this regard, the elected representatives of these local bodies belonging to various sections have not been given the powers required to be given to them under the Constitution.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to see that by the time the elections are held under the new provisions of the Constitution i.e., reserving seats for women in the Assemblies and the Lok Sabha, sufficient training is given to women representatives engaged in the local bodies. If it is done I am sure that many of the representatives who are already working in the local bodies will come forward through different political parties to contest elections to the Assemblies and to the Lok Sabha in the next elections whenever they are held.

Keeping this in mind, I would urge upon the Central Government to give priority for training in the local bodies. All members who have already been elected from among the reservation categories including women are here. I find that this aspect has not been given much importance by the Centre or the States.

Secondly, I do not wish to go into the other aspects suggested by our hon. Members regarding the rotation system that is incorporated in the Bill. Because I would only wish to inform the august House that under the

Constitution Seventy-third and Seventy-fourth representation is given to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and women in the Panchayats and also urban local bodies. There is also a constitutional mandate that these elections be held on a rotation basis. It is a sensitive issue. I understand. Those of us who have been elected from different constituencies would not like to see our constituencies being reserved for other sections. So we feel that our leadership would not be lost. But at the same time we should not lose sight of the people or the leaders in those constituencies who have been waiting for decades together for the opportunity to contest the elections to represent those constituencies in different fora. So I would urge upon the esteemed hon. Members in this august House to see that the Bill, as it is introduced, is supported and agreed to with the new proposals being made by the hon. Members being considered by an Expert Committee to be set up at the instance of the Government. This Bill may be passed as it is now. For future, when these issues are going to be considered regarding reservation for backward classes and while working out other formalities for the implementation of the provisions, it may be dealt with separately without taking up with the present Bill and the passage of the Bill.

With this, I would like to mention here that when Shri Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister, the Sixty-fourth (Amendment) Bill was introduced in this august House regarding the Panchayati Raj. At that time Janata Dal was headed by the former Prime Minister, Shri V.P. Singh, had constituted a Committee to go into the provisions of the Sixty-fourth (Amendment) Bill. That Committee was headed by Shri S.R. Bommai, who is now the Minister for Human Resource and was at that time, the Chief Minister of Karnataka. The Committee had experts. I was greatly surprised to go through the recommendations of that Committee at that time. Though it is a political

appointment, it *inter alia*, had suggested a recommendation for women in the Legislative Assemblies and Lok Sabha. At that time when Shri Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister and at the instance of Shri V.P. Singh that report was forthcoming. That was the first, as far as I know, recommendation of a Committee to provide reservation for women through a Constitution amendment.

With this, I would not wish to take further time. But there are also other issues relating to reservation. Apart from the political reservation, we also have the Common Minimum Programme of the United Front Government where there is a reference to reservation for women in Government service also.

Certain States, including Karnataka, have initiated steps for giving reservation to women. In Karnataka 30 per cent posts in Government service is reserved for women. Similarly, in Karnataka, 50 per cent of posts of teachers is reserved from women. It depends upon their fitness also.

So, the Government, while initiating measures for giving justice to the weaker sections, may also think in terms of bringing in similar measures in Government service also.

With this suggestion, I thank the hon. Chairman and also my esteemed colleagues for giving me this opportunity.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House stands adjourned to re-assemble tomorrow at 11.00 a.m.

20.15 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, September 13, 1996/Bhadra 22, 1918 (Saka)
