

Regarding the Women's Reservation Act

SHRIMATI PRAMILA BISOYI (ASKA): The Parliament has passed the Women's reservation bill which was much awaited during the last special session. However, there are several weaknesses that should be rectified at the earliest possible to make this Act robust.

It is well known that economic empowerment of women significantly contributes to their social and political empowerment. As such helping women to achieve economic independence by enabling them to be gainfully employed has been accorded the highest priority; and empowerment of women is one of the key development initiatives identified by the Government of Odisha. Therefore, promotion of Women's Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) under the aegis of 'Mission Shakti' programme was adopted in 2001 as a key strategy for achieving women's empowerment. The model has already been created by Hon'ble Chief Minister, Sri Naveen Patnaik ji to empower women economically through Women Self Help Groups under mission Shakti, which is a flagship programme of the Government, so that women can have a say in policy-making process at various levels. Just to give the hon. Members an estimate, more than 70 lakh women have been organized into more than six lakh Self Help Groups in all blocks and urban local bodies of my State Odisha. Sir, I myself am an example. I could become an elected Member of this august House representing the Self Help Groups of Mission Shakti, which was envisioned by our visionary leader Naveen Patnaik way back in 2001. Further, to achieve the dream of USD 5 trillion economy of hon. Prime Minister, all-round empowerment of women is a must. My appeal to the Government of India is to implement this Act in letter and spirit for the upliftment of women, who have been marginalised since centuries, politically, socially and economically. Vande Utkal Janani. Jai Jagannath.