

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6131

ANSWERED ON:03.05.2010

ERADICATION OF UNTOUCHABILITY

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Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has made any survey/study on the prevalence of untouchability and impact of the protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 in the country;
- (b) if so, the details and the outcome thereof alongwith the number of cases of untouchability reported during the last three years and the current year and the arrest made thereunder, State-wise;
- (c) whether Navsarjan Trust and Robert F. Kennedy Centre for Justice and Human rights have found in a survey that untouchability is still prevalent in the rural areas of the country especially in Gujarat;
- (d) if so, the findings thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government for complete eradication of untouchability from the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT (SHRI D. NAPOLEON)

(a) & (b): In accordance with Section 15A(4) of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, the Central Government for every year, places on the Table of each House of Parliament, a report on the measures taken by itself and by the State Governments in pursuance of the provisions of Section 15(A) of the Act.

As per data provided by National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, State/Union Territory wise number of cases registered by Police and the arrests made under the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, during calendar years 2006 to 2008, is given in the annexed Statement.

(c) & (d): Government of Gujarat have received a report, titled "Understanding Untouchability", claimed to be a comprehensive study of practices and conditions in 1589 villages of Gujarat, by Navsarjan Trust and Robert F. Kennedy Centre for Justice and Human Rights. The report claims that untouchability is still prevalent.

(e): Article 17 of the Constitution of India has abolished the practice of untouchability; its practice in any form is forbidden and it is an offence punishable in accordance with law. An Act of Parliament, namely, the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, prescribes punishment for the enforcement of any disability arising from preaching and practice of untouchability. The said Act is implemented by the concerned State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. With a view to ensure effective implementation of provisions of the Act, central assistance is provided to States/Union Territories, which includes strengthening of the enforcement machinery, incentive for inter caste marriages and awareness generation. They are requested to implement provisions of the Act in letter and spirit. A high powered Committee constituted in 2006, under the Chairpersonship of Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment, with members from Ministries of Home Affairs and Tribal Affairs, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and non-officials, also reviews implementation of the Act in States/Union Territories. The Committee has so far held nine meetings wherein the status of implementation of the Act in 25 States and 4 Union Territories, including Gujarat, has been reviewed.