

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1013
ANSWERED ON:15.11.2010
ERADICATION OF UNTOUCHABILITY
Kodikunnil Shri Suresh;Rani Killi Krupa

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; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government for complete eradication of untouchability from the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT(SHRI D. NAPOLEON)

(a) and (b) : - The Ministry had sanctioned assistance for a study on 'Evaluation of the Protection of Civil Rights Acts, 1955, and its impact on the eradication of untouchability', by the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, in 2004. The study covered 24 villages in six States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, and was conducted on sample basis. It indicated that practice of untouchability, though declining still persists to some extent, and inter-alia, recommended certain amendments in the Act, procedural reforms, prompt payment of compensation to witnesses, and setting up of a Civil Rights Enforcement Committee.

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 arrest made under the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, during calendar years 2006 to 2008, is given in the annexed Statement.

(c):- 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 ten meetings wherein the status of implementation of the Act in 24 States and 4 Union Territories has been reviewed.