

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4759
ANSWERED ON:23.04.2013
OFFENCES AGAINST SCS STS
Bhagora Shri Tarachand

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

- (a) whether the National Advisory Council has recommended that the act of forcing the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes into customs like Devdasi and vocations which are considered as unclean like removing carcasses, digging graves etc. may be made punishable offences;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether it is also proposed to make caste based abuse or harassment and defiling the symbols/icons being treated as sacred by the SCs/STs as offences; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI PORIKA BALRAM NAIK)

(a) to (d): A Working Group of the National Advisory Council, has inter-alia, recommended that compelling a member of a Scheduled Caste (SC) or a Scheduled Tribe (ST) to dispose or carry human or animal carcasses, or to dig graves and performing or promoting dedicating a SC or a ST woman to a deity, idol, object or worship, temple, or other religious institution as a devadasi or any other similar practice, be construed as an offence under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) {PoA} Act, 1989.

As per another recommendation, abusing any member of a SC or a ST by caste name in any place within public view, and destroying, damaging or defiling any object generally known to be held sacred by members of a SC or ST, shall also be an offence under the PoA Act.

The Ministry, having done consultations with the concerned agencies, has commenced the process of amendments in the PoA Act.