

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4727
ANSWERED ON:12.08.2014
STUDY ON UNTOUCHABILITY
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Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the evil practice of untouchability is still prevalent in some form or the other in some parts of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to conduct a fresh study on the impact of Protection of Civil Rights Act on untouchability; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to eradicate this social evil from the society?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT)

(a) and (b): Article 17 of the Constitution of India has abolished 'Untouchability', its practice in any form forbidden and enforcement of any disability arising out of 'Untouchability' is an offence punishable in accordance with law. In pursuance of this Constitutional provision, the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955 was enacted and notified on 08.05.1955. Subsequently, it was amended, and renamed in the year 1976 as the Protection of Civil Rights {PCR} Act, 1955. The PCR Act prescribes punishment for the enforcement of any disability arising from the practice of untouchability.

As per the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, the subject matter of offences under the PCR is allocated to the Ministry of Home Affairs. As per the data of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs, 87 number of cases were registered under the PCR Act during 2013.

(c) and (d): Presently no such proposal is under consideration of this Ministry. As regards steps taken to eradicate evil practice of untouchability, responsibility of implementation of the PCR Act primarily lies with the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. Nevertheless, under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Central assistance is admissible to them, inter-alia, for awareness generation and incentive for inter-caste marriage where one of the spouse is a member of a Scheduled Caste, to promote social integration and harmony.