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17.25 hrs

Title: Resolution regarding proper utilisation of funds for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Contd.).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the House shall take up Item No. 2 of the Private Members Business -- Resolution by Dr. V. Saroja.

Before we take up the Resolution for discussion, we have to fix the time for this Resolution. Shall we allot one hour for this?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, Sir. You fix a minimum of two hours for this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, we fix two hours for this.

DR. V. SAROJA (RASIPURAM): I beg to move:

"This House expresses its grave concern over underutilisation of funds meant for economic, social and educational empowerment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people and urges upon the Government to ensure allotment of adequate funds for around development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people in proportion to their population and monitor utilisation of funds under various welfare schemes for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people by the States."

Hon. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for allowing me to move this very important Resolution. The Government has a special concern and commitment for the well being of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

According to the 1991 census, there are about 132.22 million Scheduled Castes representing 16.48 per cent of the total population. Eighty-one per cent of these Scheduled Caste people live in rural India. There is a decadal increase of Scheduled Castes by about 2.2 to 2.3 per cent. The Scheduled Caste population is scattered throughout all the States of India. They are more concentrated in ten States – Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. In Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, they constitute more than 20 per cent to 22 per cent of the population of the State.

Coming to the population aspect of the Scheduled Tribes, there are about 67.76 million Scheduled Tribes in India. Percentage-wise, they represent about 8.8 per cent of the total population of this country. Out of this, 1.2 million are primitive tribes. The Scheduled Tribes have the highest concentration in the North-Eastern States – Mizoram representing 94.75 per cent; Nagaland 87.70 per cent; Meghalaya 85.53 per cent; Arunachal Pradesh 63.66 per cent; and the Union Territory of Lakshadweep represents 93.15 per cent. In Orissa, it is 22.21 per cent; Gujarat 4.98 per cent; Maharashtra 9.27 per cent; and Bihar 7.6 per cent.

While it is relevant that I speak about the population of this country, it is also relevant that I point out the Constitutional guarantees for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Article 14 provides for equality before law. The Poona Pact says that the reservation is in lieu of the separate electorate requested by hon. *Bharat Ratna* Dr. Ambedkar. It is not a charity but it is a Constitutional right.

Fifty-three years after attaining Independence and fifty years after the formation of the Constitution of India, has the Government satisfied its Constitutional duties to which it is committed? With grave concern, I would like to point out that Article 275 (1) provides for special financial assistance to be ensured to them. Under the Constitution of India, it is said that financial assistance is to be given. During the Ninth Five-Year Plan, a Plan outlay of Rs.3399.5 crore has been earmarked for Centrally sponsored schemes including special Central allowance and Special Component Plan.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Dr. Saroja, you can continue next time.

DR. V. SAROJA : All right, Sir.
