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Title: Need to enact laws to eradicate superstition by punishing those who propagate such belief.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Mr. Chairman, I stand here to raise a very important and urgent matter of public importance and I seek the indulgence of the Parliamentary Affairs Minister who is present in this House. Dr. Narendra Dabholkar had dedicated his life to fight against the superstition and black magic. He was propagating the idea of reason and wanted the society to develop scientific temper. His brutal murder has shocked the nation. He was trying relentlessly to make a law prohibiting superstitious and black magic. The CCTV footage recovered by cops immediately after rationalist Dabholkar's murder last Tuesday has not yielded any concrete clues about the unknown assailants. This House should condemn the killing in the strongest possible words and the perpetrators of the crime be brought to book at the earliest.

Mr. Dabholkar was in the forefront of anti-superstition movement in Maharashtra. Angry protests sparked by the Dabholkar's killing prompted Maharashtra Government to enforce the anti-superstition Law that he had championed for years. I would urge upon the Government and this House to enact a law to eradicate superstitious belief.

There are still certain practices in our country which reminds of dark ages. At times, news reports of human sacrifices are also being published. Today, in a knee-jerk reaction, the Maharashtra Government had issued an ordinance but I would request the Union Government to look into all aspects of the intended law and take steps accordingly. Human sacrifices or even animal sacrifices before deities should be treated as not only cruelty but also murder. Similarly, propagating and advertising of gemstones for better future is nothing but fraud. Advertisers, publishers and broadcasters should also be punished. That will be a fitting tribute to Dr. Dabholkar's memory.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Prof. Saugata Roy and

Shri Rajendra Agrawal are permitted to associate with the matters raised by Shri B. Mahtab.