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Title: Need for suitable law to curb atrocities against women.

SHRI P.R. NATARAJAN (COIMBATORE): Sir, I express my deep concern over the steep escalation in crimes against women. I am alarmed by the barbarity and savagery of the atrocities being committed at a time when women are entering public life, institutions of learning and diverse work spheres in increasing numbers. The crude commodification of women and the portrayal of women as sex objects in the mass media is highly objectionable and is not only demeaning to women but creates an environment which trivializes the crime of sexual harassment and violence against women.

In the period between 2006 and 2010, crimes against women have registered an increase of as much as 29.3 per cent. While registered cases of domestic violence against women have increased by 5 per cent over the previous year to 94,041 cases, the number of dowry deaths is as high as 8,391 in 2010. The increase in the number of cases of sexual assault and rape show that the safety and security of women is deeply compromised. There were over 94,000 rapes registered in 2010. In other words, in every hour seven women or children became victims of rape. Many cases go unreported because the victims belong to the poorer, socially oppressed sections who have little access to justice. In particular, sexual assaults on tribal and dalit women are greatly underreported. Shockingly, the conviction rates in crimes against women are just 26 per cent which means that three-fourths of the criminals go unpunished. The long delay in the judicial process is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the increase in rapes and gang rapes being witnessed in several parts of the country.

The failure of the Central Government to make the essential changes in the legal framework, even though Bills are pending for several years, makes the situation worse. India is one of the few countries which does not have a special law against child sexual abuse even though such crimes are increasing. Working women face increased cases of sexual harassment at the work place, including horrific cases against young women in the IT sector. Yet, 12 years after the Supreme Court guidelines in the Vishakha case, the Government has still not enacted the required law. Even though crimes in the name of honour have increased, the Government has refused to enact a comprehensive legislation because of powerful casteist lobbies.

I request the Government to enact a suitable law against the atrocities on women. The social, political, and economic factors leading to escalating violence against women must be addressed in a comprehensive and gender sensitive manner.

श्री पन्ना लाल पुनिया (बायबंकी): महोदय, मैं अपने आपको माननीय सदस्य श्री पी. आर. नटराजन द्वारा उठाए गए विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I would like to make a fervent appeal to all of you not to leave the House immediately after making your submissions. I request them to wait for some time because there are a few other Members who want to make their submissions.