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Title: Requests the Government to bring forward National Trust Bill and need to implement the persons with Disabilities Equal Opportunities Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act, 1995.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Sir, I would like to request all the hon. Members that I wish to raise a non-controversial matter and I would like to have the kind attention of all the hon. Members here ... (Interruptions)

Sir, today is the World Disability Day. I must confess that I was shocked to learn -- I have had the privilege of attending the National Disabilities Convention which is being held in the Capital today -- about certain facts. There are over seven crores of disabled persons in this country and really I was very much ashamed to have heard that as Parliamentarians we had not done our duty and the Government is also not doing its duty. It appears that in the year 1995, the Persons with Disabilities Equal Opportunities Protection of Rights and Full participation Act 1995 was passed.

However, successive Governments have not really implemented this Act. I am told that the Central Coordination Committee which was to be appointed under the Act of 1995 was appointed only two-three days back.

Sir, these people have very serious problems. Many of them said that they cannot even go to the polling booths to exercise their franchise as the citizens of this country because of the problem of movement. They do not get jobs. They do not have even the minimal facilities so that they can live a somewhat decent life. I wish to bring to the notice of the hon. Members here that we owe to these people much more than paying lip service for their problems. The Government has a special responsibility to these people who are our sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters. For no fault of theirs, they are unable to enjoy the minimal facilities that the Constitution of India provides for them.

I am told that there was a proposal to pass a Bill called the National Trust Bill for Mentally Retarded, for people with Cerebral Palsy, Autism and Multiple Disability Bill. But, I am given to understand, that the Cabinet has again postponed consideration of this Bill. A lot of representations have been made saying that this Bill should be expedited. The problems of the mentally retarded and those who are suffering from cerebral palsy are separate. We should hear the anguish expressed by the parents of mentally retarded children. They cannot look after themselves and they have no resources to provide for the future of their children. The mother of a mentally retarded child said to me, 'What will happen to my child when I die? Nobody will be there to look after my child!'

This is a very important matter. The National Trust has to be formed. I earnestly request the Government to bring this Bill soon so that it can be passed. I also request that the 1995 Act should be implemented with all vigour so that a little benefit can go to those people. I appeal to all sections of the House, which include myself, to really do something to see that these citizens of our country are given the minimum facilities that they are entitled to enjoy.

This World Disability Day should not be observed as a mere ritual. It should be observed with all seriousness and sincerity. That is my appeal to all sections of the House.

">SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (BARAMATI): Sir, I support the proposal given by Somnathji. I request the Government to expedite the matter and try to bring this Bill as early as possible, if possible in this Session itself.

">SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH (BANKA): Sir, we also associate ourselves with this issue.

MR.SPEAKER: Yes. The entire House associates itself with this issue.

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">संसदीय कार्य मंत्री तथा पर्यटन मंत्री (श्री मदन लाल खुराना): अध्यक्ष जी, माननीय सोमनाथ बाबू और लीडर ऑफ द अपोजीशन ने जो कहा है,

आज विश्व डिसेबलड डे है, इस बारे में सदन की जो भावनायें हैं, मैं उसे संबंधित मिनिस्टर तक पहुंचा रहा हूँ। इस संबंध में बहुत जल्द एक बिल इस सदन में लाया जायेगा।