

Sixteenth Loksabha

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Title: Need to create a statutory body to preside over the compensation package for Member of Parliament.

SHRI FEROZE VARUN GANDHI (SULTANPUR): Madam, a few weeks ago, in the National Capital, a farmer from Tamil Nadu tried to commit suicide. A few weeks before that, groups of farmers from that State to demonstrate their own suffering, held skulls farmers... (*Interruptions*) भैया, या तो पहले मैं बोल दूँ या आप बोल दें।... (व्यवधान)

माननीय अध्यक्ष : प्लीज, क्या हो गया; आप बोलिए न। I have allowed you only to speak. You should not see here and there and react. You kindly address the Chair only.

SHRI FEROZE VARUN GANDHI : Madam, a few weeks before that, groups of farmers held skulls of farmers, who had committed suicide in that same State to show their misery.

On the 19th of July, the State Assembly of Tamil Nadu accorded to itself a pay rise of 200 per cent. Without imputing any motives to this, it sent a broad message of insensitivity.

Madam, in the first Cabinet Meeting of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1952 after winning the elections, the Cabinet took a unanimous decision not to avail of their salaries for three months in the light of the economic sufferings of the people at that time. We had Members of the Constituent Assembly like Shri Biswanath Das from Odisha, who chose to draw only Rs. 25 a day as against Rs. 40 which they were entitled to, to show their sensitivity during that period. V.I. Muniswamy Pillai in 1949 in the Madras Assembly imposed a voluntary cut of Rs. 5 per diem in recognition of the suffering of the farmers, and the Madras Assembly unanimously passed the Motion.

Madam, in the Parliament of the United Kingdom on which this is largely based, there is a model of an Independent Authority, which is called the Senior Salaries Review Body, which is a body consisting of non-Parliament Members, non-politicians, academics, jurists, social welfare activities takes into account the recommendations of both the beneficiaries, that is, the Members of Parliament and the public. It takes into account the affordability and the validity of these claims, and then requests the Government for it.

Madam, such a mechanism does not exist in our country sadly. Arrogating unto ourselves the authority to increase our own fiscal compensation is not in line with the moral foundations of our democracy. Gandhiji wrote and I quote:

“In my opinion, the allowances should be exactly in consonance with the proportion of the services rendered to the nation.”

Madam, in the last decade, Parliamentarians had sought for an increase of 400 per cent for their compensation.

HON. SPEAKER: What is your suggestion?

SHRI FEROZE VARUN GANDHI : Have we really earned this massive increment?

I just want to make three points. One is that 50 per cent of the Bills in the last 15 years of this Parliament that have been passed, have not been referred to serious Parliamentary Committee deliberations, which in fact, means that the last passed Bills shows priority for politics and not policy because this House has created itself to dissect, analyze and deliberate, and then pass on policy-making.

HON. SPEAKER: In ‘Zero Hour’ only point is allowed to be raised.

SHRI FEROZE VARUN GANDHI : Madam, just a minute more.

Madam, 41 per cent of the Bills have been passed without discussion in the last 15 years. There are those, who say that MPs should be paid in line with the private sector.

Madam, the private sector’s only motive is self-interest and profit. We are committed to the ideals of our forefathers. We are committed to make India a country of our dreams. I do not want to refer to the issues of MPs’ behaviour, performance or things such as taking cash for asking questions. I just want to make a point regarding low number of sittings and constant chaos that we witness.

Lastly, I want to suggest that we should create an external body -- which could be a statutory body -- which presides over our compensation package or if we want to self-regulate, we should empathetically do so. Looking at the condition of the country, we should forego any increase in compensation for the rest of this 16th Lok Sabha. Thank you, Madam.

HON. SPEAKER:

Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi.