

Sixteenth Lok Sabha

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Title: Regarding a law for welfare of domestic helps.

SHRIMATI MAMATA THAKUR (BANGAON): A dangerous trend has cropped up in the country since long concerning more than 4 million domestic help, commonly derogatorily termed as *Naukrani* by their employers. Including the recent incident in Noida, the list is long where the domestic helps were subjected to harassment, physical and mental torture and sometimes brutal assault. It is also a fact that male domestic helps have reversed the picture somewhat. But the gravity of the issue remains.

As the domestic helps remain in an unorganized sector, there is no law safeguarding their rights, wages or other benefits and not even job security. Most of the domestic helps are migrants, women and many a time, minors from the lowest income strata. This makes them vulnerable to exploitation, being locked up, starved and tortured. The problem has two dark sides. One is apathy of the Government towards them, another being the political insensitivity.

As we all know, Noida incident led to the arrest of several Bengali people who hail from West Bengal and have valid documents. But alleged political interference has led to them being levelled as Bangladeshis. The political insensitivity is deliberate. But, the Government apathy is causing more damage to the domestic helps throughout the country.

India is a signatory to ILO's 189th Convention on Domestic Workers but did nothing to honour the Mandate for daily and weekly rest, minimum wages or protect them from violence because the mandate is not binding. A Bill named 'Domestic Workers Welfare & Social Security Act' was drafted by the National Commission for Women few years back but was not taken care of properly.

I, therefore, urge the Government to make a law to protect the domestic helps.