

were armed with lathies, fire arms and also hand grenades. Apprehending tension the marriage procession was taken back and consultations were later held with the residents of the Village Panwari. The marriage procession was again brought on 22nd June under police protection. The members of the other community of Panwari and from nearby village attacked the police and other officials. There was exchange of fire between the police and the mob. Besides clashes also took place between the members of the two communities at various places. In order to control the situation, curfew was imposed in the jurisdiction of 7 police stations of Agra District. Curfew was relaxed from time to time according to the prevailing situation. Incidents of road-blockade, arson, looting and brickbattling were also reported from adjoining villages on the 22nd and 23rd June, 1990.

According to report received 9 persons lost their lives of whom 7 belonged to Scheduled Castes. 8 persons were reportedly missing and 210 persons were injured including 18 with serious injuries. 848 persons were arrested in connection with these incidents. Upon these incidents taking place, the Army stages flage march in the affected areas, District authorities got 394 licensed fire arms deposited in the police stations.

An amount of Rs. 10 lakhs has been distributed to the persons affected in these incidents from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. The collector of Agra has distributed an amount of over Rs. 10 lakhs, as per the announcement made by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Government of Uttar Pradesh is taking action to distribute relief to the remaining affected families. Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh has announced that Rs. one lakh each will be given to the families/dependents of the persons who lost their lives in these incidents, Rs. 5,000/- each will be given to the persons who sustained serious injuries and Rs. 2,000/- each will be given to persons who suffered minor injuries.

During the above incident, Centre re-

mained in touch with the State Government and provide extra police forces to the State Government for maintaining law and order.

The State Government has been advised to take all necessary measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in future.

14.50 hrs.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
BILL—*CONTD*

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shrimati Usha Sinha, on 30th May, 1990, namely:—

"That the Bill to constitute a National Commission for Women and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

I suppose Mr. Harish Rawat was on his legs the other day. He may continue now.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, with great regret, I have to say that I am forced not only to oppose this Bill introduced in the House by my friend Shri Ram Vilas Paswan but also to say that the hasty presentation of this Bill before the House is a politically motivated act and that it would be very difficult for any organisation worth its name to support this Bill within or outside this august House. I suspect that even women's organisations affiliated to the ruling party might have raised objections about this Bill and I am confident that our sisters present here would not hesitate to raise these issues here. I would like to say only this much that the hastiness and insincerity of the Government in this regard is evident from the fact that today the hon.

[Sh. Harish Rawat]

Minister has brought forward more than a dozen Amendments for the consideration of the House. I believe that this in itself is a record.

Hon. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the idea of establishing a National Commission for women is not a new one. As early as 1974 itself, on the basis of the United Nations Resolution, we initiated this process by setting up a Committee, which later on came to be known as the Committee on Status of Women in India. At that time, the proposal was to establish an organisation, which would not only be statutory in nature, but also autonomous in structure. However, today, the Bill brought forward by the Minister of a Government which claims to be the well-wisher of people belonging to all walks of life, fulfils none of those two conditions, viz., Constitutional Status and autonomy completely. The major hurdle is that it does not have statutory status like the S.C. and S.T. Commission, the Union Public Service Commission or any other body for that matter. Although outside the House, including Lucknow and other places, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan has stated that this Commission would be granted Constitutional Status, it has become very clear now that he has not kept his word. I have tried to go through these Amendments. From that, it seems that the hon. Minister is trying to complete the formalities. So far as the question of autonomy is concerned, lesser said the better. The staff in the entire structure ranging from Members to the Chairman/Chairperson do not have the rights enjoyed by even ordinary Government officials or employees. The Government has got the discretionary powers to dismiss them. In your Amendment, you have said only this much that they would be given due notice in advance, explaining to them the reasons for their expulsion from service. The sword of Damocles would hang over their head, throughout their three year tenure in office. After all, what do you expect from them? You want them to oversee whether the women are benefiting from the welfare schemes launched by the Govern-

ment whether they are being properly implemented or whether there are any loopholes in the administrative machinery etc., etc.? Although you have mentioned a large number of aims and objectives in the Statement of Objects, you have not explained why such a sword of damocles is being kept hanging over the head of those working in the Commission. Why is that there is a chance for the Chairman Chairpersons to come under the axe, if he dares to displease the administrative machinery. Only you can explain it. This body is to act as a watchdog to oversee the actions of the officials concerned with women's welfare. How can this Commission work effectively as a watchdog, when there is so much uncertainty about the service conditions of the staff?

Sir, what adds to the complexity of the problem is the fact that there is complete uncertainty about the status of the Chairman/Chairperson. I have some doubts in this regard. When the Committee was constituted during our regime, it was headed by the Prime Minister and both the Cabinet Minister and the Minister of State were its Members. Moreover, a woman used to be in-charge of the Commission. Today, you have entrusted this responsibility to a Deputy Minister. Now, I am not questioning the validity of this decision, but I would like to know the status of the Chairman/Chairperson. Will his status be equivalent to that of a Deputy Minister or a Minister of State? Be kind enough to clarify this point also. Further, you should do something, at least to make us believe that you are somewhere near to those objectives with which you have brought forward this Bill.

Sir, Government has said that this body would have full powers to make enquiries. But how would they accomplish their work without any machinery available for it either on central or on state level. During our regime, we had taken initiatives to create a cell on D.I.G. level in the state to assist it and make investigations for it. But, presently you have no conception of creating an organisation or an office for it either in Delhi or in States.

I would like that they should tell us the manner in which the Commission would perform their duties without any infrastructure. They talk a lot of giving it powers of enquiry but without making any provision for it in the Commission of Enquiries Act."

15.00 hrs.

It has been said that this Commission would draft and analyse the laws and policies regarding women but to whom would it make its recommendations? Would the Chairman of this commission have to chase your joint secretary and additional secretary for getting an appointment? If you were really so serious and honest about it, you should have made some provisions enabling them to put up their conclusions directly before Parliament and legislative assemblies. But you have simply said that the commission would send its recommendations to the Government only for information... (*Interruptions*)... Now Subhasiniji, you can see it for yourself as to what it actually means. I do hope that you would help them in making some provision which may give us some satisfaction. If not for our's satisfaction, you should do it for the satisfaction of those women whom you lead and for whom this bill has ben introduced. You must work at least for their satisfaction. You had proposed some amendments in the original bill at the time of tis introduction. You have entrusted this commission with 14 terms of reference and made various other provisions to that effect. I admit that these provisions are correct but you should have added some other clauses regarding its constitutional authority and then even more items of work could have been entrusted to it. But you seem to be afraid of the fact that the specification of powers and provisions of the commission would create a bad blood and tussle between the Ministry concerned and its bureaucrats. This is why you have made a provision of such a body in this Bill which is like a completely handicapped child. No doubt, you have kept its ears open to listen to the woes of the people but it is without powers to take action. You have given it neither hands nor feet nor power to

work. For that matter, this Bill of yours is completely silent. Therefore, I would like to remind you that just paying lip sympathy and shedding crocodile tears, it not going to serve any purpose. It would do no good to anyone. It seems that you have introduced this bill under pressure and by way of appeasing a particular section. The way you are introducing these handicapped bills, one after the other, is not at all effective and good. I do not say that Government itself is handicapped but its bills are certainly so. Therefore, the hopes of those sections of society which had great expectations from this Government are being belied as this Government is introducing disappointing bills one after another.

Therefore, I would like to request the hon. Minister that he should not think of this political mileage only while appointing the committee and chairman of that committee. You should gracefully devise a way by which the judges of Supreme Courts, the Speaker of Lok Sabha and leaders of the opposition are involved in it and their nominees get a berth in it. Its members should be those persons who can fulfil their responsibility and strike at the shortcomings of the system and tell us about our mistakes that we might have committed.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Rawat, I have ten names from your party. I have already given you 15 minutes time. Now you should conclude at the earliest.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would conclude within one minute. Secondly, you should also remove the sword of removal handing over its chairperson and members. I know that you would not make use of that sword as you are a man of non-violent type, but your secretary may wield that authority. Therefore, you should not reduce the chairperson to the level of a peon and force him to seek your prior permission to see you. You should scrap this provision. You should not only give powers to Parliament and the legislative Assemblies but also make such arrangement that in case of violation, it may approach the court di-

[Sh. Harish Rawat]

rectly and ask them to take cognizance of the crime. You should take these precautionary measures.

In addition to giving it statutory status, you should give it complete autonomy. If you do this, we would be happy to support it. Otherwise, we would be forced to say that it is a fraud against the womenfolk of India for limited political ends. Lastly, I oppose it.

SHRIMATI SUBASHINI ALI (Kanpur):  
Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to welcome and to support this bill. The reason is that this bill and its introduction is not a gesture of compassion shown by the Government. In fact, it is the result of the persistent struggle waged by many women organisations and thousands of women for the last 15 years. Just now, you have been reminded that a committee named "Status of Women Committee" was set up in 1974. This committee had recommended that formation of such a commission. The Government, which had constituted that committee, published its recommendations but never considered it necessary to implement them.

It is not important as to what is the status of the Minister in charge of women welfare. However, what matters is the intention and approach of that person. During the period of last 15 years, we have seen that the Government which had published the recommendations, had done nothing to implement them and did not take even a single step in that direction. One thing more we had noticed that in the previous Government though the Minister in charge of women welfare was a high ranking Minister, she never tried to solve women's problems nor she thought it necessary to discuss it with the women and their organisation so as to understand their problems.

The previous Government, after a prolonged series of deliberation, brought forth a National Perspective Plan for Women but they never sought the advice of anybody and consulted none. Then most of the women

organisations had pointed out its shortcomings and submitted their reports to the Government. The new Government had also talked of a Commission for Women' in its election manifesto. At that time we had made it clear that we did not want a commission for women, we did not require any statutory commission for women since we did not need a toy for recreation but what we wanted was a tool for securing a rightful place for women in India and to get them their due, for which for which we have been struggling constantly. We have noticed and understood the shortcomings of the bill that was presented during the last session and thereafter all the ladies belonging to different parties, had a discussion with the Ministers. The representatives of various women's organizations also held discussions with the Government. During the last inter-session period we had a round of two-three meetings with the representatives of the Government where the representatives of all women's organisations were present and the women and the leaders of that women's organisation were also present in that meeting whose leader spoke just now. We are happy that most of the recommendations made by us have been accepted by the Government and whatever amendments have been presented before us by the Government are not only the amendments made by them but reflect all that the women's organisations had suggested. We should try to understand the necessity of such a commission. Our constitution provides that women shall be treated at par in all the fields, it says that as per the provisions of law there will be no discrimination between a man and a woman but one should see what is the actual state of affairs in this country. In every field we find that women find a back seat and the evils and backwardness of our society are mainly responsible for it. As a result, if we have a look at the life of a women, right from birth till death we find that at every step she has to face injustice and inequality. Now because of latest scientific inventions we have come to such a stage that it has become difficult for a female child to take birth because by virtue of sex determination tests, the sex of the foetus can be easily determined before birth

and generally the mothers carrying a female child get it aborted for fear of social evils, stigma dowry etc. In a way they commit murder of their female foetus. In other words it has become difficult for a girl child even to take birth. In case a daughter is born, what she has in store for her? Here we have official statistics before us to show that the mortality rate among boys between the age of one and four is 6.8% as against the rate of 10.1% in case of girls. Does it mean that within a family, a female child is not properly looked after whereas a male child gets better treatment because only the left over is given to a girl, at times she is fed on water and that sort of treatment is meted out to her throughout her life by us and the society. If we look at the statistics relating to literacy, we find that against 46.9 literate males, there are 24.8% literate females. There are so many things. If we look at the rate of women employment, we find that on the live registers of employment exchanges in the country, the number of unemployed women is increasing very rapidly. As compared to ten to twelve lakh unemployed women registered with the employment exchanges in 1975, their number had touched the mark of 51 lakhs in 1986. Not only this, the percentage of employed women is also decreasing. We find that in 1969, there were 31.53% employed ladies which had gone down to 20.21% in 1981. Thus we see that women are discriminated against in every field in the society. With the passage of time the incidents of atrocities and injustice on them are also increasing. If we look at the figures of atrocities on women, we find that the number of such incident is increasing. The rape cases have also registered an increase. The incidents of bride burning for dowry have gone up. As such all that we want is a tool in our hands so that we have not to remain dependent on anyone. By using that tool, we shall try to improve the status of women in the society to command an equal status. It is for this reason that we have been constantly demanding a commission for women, we have struggled for it and a glimpse of the same is seen in this bill.

Hon. Rawatji has said that this is a bill in

which no rights have been given. But I think that there may be certain deficiencies in this bill and other lady members belonging to my party will definitely throw some light on them. We do feel there are still certain flaws and we would like the Government to remove them. But the purpose for which we have struggled and what we find in it, we should try to fully understand its importance. The commission that is being formed, provided for different kinds of rights, this bill takes care of all those rights for which we have fought. The first thing is that some of the laws that have been made in favour of women, although we are not fully satisfied with them, are in our favour. But we see that most of the laws exist to violate the provisions of the Constitution and treat the womenfolk with discrimination. The women do not enjoy their due rights, because they have neither the right of inheritance nor an equal share in the ancestral property. All kinds of partial treatment is meted out to women by the laws. But the laws which are in favour of women, are not implemented. The commission has been vested with powers to see as to whether these laws are being implemented or not. The commission can look into it and identify such cases. Not only this, a number of schemes have been prepared by the Government for the upliftment of women. In this regard I would like to know as to what is happening to them? Has the interest of women been kept in mind at the time of formulation of such schemes. To make sure that the interests of women are properly taken care of at the time of formulating such schemes, the commission has been vested with power to make its recommendations in this regard and the Government would be bound to consult the commission before announcing any such scheme. Not only this, even in the planning process and in the development process, the Commission for Women will get a chance to sit and discuss with the Planning Commission and place their views and recommendations before the planning commission. Besides this, the point, which Shri Rawatji had pointed out that in case of any injustice to women or atrocities committed on them, I would like to know whether this commission will be able to do

[Shrimati Subashini Ali]

anything. What I personally feel is that it will be able to act in that case. But what is the factual position today? It is indeed a painful situation. We have seen that whenever discussions are held on the cases of rape and atrocities on women, these discussions are generally politicised. Keeping in view the Government in power in the state, where rape cases are taking place we decide whether to speak or to remain silent. If a rape case takes place in Uttar Pradesh it will certainly be discussed in the House but on the contrary if a similar incident takes place in Tripura it is not allowed to be discussed in the House. Shall we not talk about this shameful incident which took place in Tripura where women were raped and an F.I.R. against the same has yet not been lodged with any police station. What kind of law is this? Where and to whom will the women, who has been a victim of such an atrocity, go?

[English]

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALM (Sa-lem): It is said that it cannot be discussed in the House.

SHRIMATI SUBHASHINI ALI: We are not afraid of discussing it in the House.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUBHASHINI ALI: So far as atrocities on women are concerned, we say that there should be a uniform provision of law for one and all and women should get justice. Whenever and wherever atrocities on women are committed or wherever matters pertaining to women are discussed, it is said that they will fight against injustice and join hands unitedly but in fact no concrete step has been taken. Generally F.I.Rs are not registered. To check such incidents the commission has been given adequate powers and in this regard the bill provides that—

[English]

"It will have the power of a civil court."

[Translation]

So it can inquire into such cases. Besides conducting an inquiry, it can also summon the officers responsible therefor to appear before the commission to tender evidence. It can also record their statement, pursue such cases and take the case to the courts of law. They have been given all these powers and you also realize the urgency thereof because a person belonging to the weakest sections of our country does not have a forum for the redressal of his grievances in cases of atrocities on them. Being it otherwise they are not going to get justice at the hands of their oppressors even when they would have exhausted their energies to achieve that end. As such the commission has been given powers to act, inquire, pursue and make their recommendations regarding punishment in the cases of atrocities on women coming before them if they find that the Government and administration are not taking any action in this regard or in such matters where such cases have not been registered. It has been said that the Chairperson of this commission will be a messenger who will perform the duty of seeking appointments from Ministers and the Secretaries. It is something totally misleading. It has been mentioned in the Bill in quite unambiguous terms that all recommendations of this commission will be sent to the Government.

[English]

"And the Central Government shall cause all the reports to be laid before each House of Parliament."

[Translation]

It means that the Government will not be having any discretion in this regard and the Government shall have to lay it before the House along with a statement giving the details of the recommendations accepted by them and explaining the reasons in respect of those recommendations which could not be accepted by them and thereafter the House will decide whether to accept or to

reject a particular recommendation. Women have struggled to achieve it. Do not mock at them. Today we are proud that the women's movement did not think on party lines. Rising above the party politics, women stood up unitedly to struggle for this commission and achieved a big success. Do not think that it is a trivial achievement and now I would warn you not to make an attempt to obstruct this bill. Hitherto you have been putting many hurdles. I would like to ask you to refrain from playing with the women power. However, if you chose to make an attempt to obstruct the passage of this Bill, the women of this country will never forgive you and wherever you go, you will be confronted with questions in this regard. With these words I thank you.

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN (Indore): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think, no one will dare to oppose this Bill after listening to the speech of Subhashini ji.

Sir, a proper psyche towards the women has to be developed. We have been witnessing since centuries that whenever this country was invaded, the first attack had been on womanhood and maternity. A positive motive works behind this also. The nation in which women and maternity is weakened, becomes weak itself ultimately. We should ponder over the reason why the invaders assumed that women in this country were weak. When we started our freedom struggle, our attitude towards women changed for the better. All our leaders and other right thinking people who cared for our society and the country have observed that our country will not be self-reliant in real sense unless our women attain self-respect and power and they become conscious of their strength.

Sir, in this country the women were either raised to the height of a goddess or trampled under the feet like a slave but they were never acknowledged as a person, which was necessary. I think the intention behind the Bill on Women Commission is that the women of our country should neither be treated as goddess nor as a slave but as a person who being the citizen of the nation could contribute alongwith men in the coun-

try's development. Now the women of the country have come to know all about it. They no longer leave any thing to their fate, that is why the women and their organisations had demanded the setting up of this commission. Though several committees for the development of women were constituted including the one that was constituted in 1987 by the then Prime Minister, yet the difficulties of the women were never understood in the real sense. The present Bill has been brought as a solid step in this direction. I hope that all hon. Members will pass this Bill by extending their support to it.

It is often said that a man and a woman are two wheels of a cart. But I personally feel that a woman is a charioteer and a man is a warrior. In every role as a mother, as a sister and as a wife— the woman is a charioteer who gives direction to the man and to the whole nation. Thus the man who is like the warrior will get full support and guidance from the woman with the help of this commission on women. When this commission is constituted, the task of giving direction to the nation will go in the hands of the women in real sense and the country will develop. We shall have to pay our attention to women in the fields of education and economic independence if we want actual development of the country. Five fields need our utmost attention education, self-reliance, fearlessness, equality and self-respect. I hope that this commission which seeks to bestow certain rights on its Chairman and the women at large will take special care to consider all these points from legal as well as developmental points of view.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we see that there is a higher rate of drop-out amongst girls in the field of education. I do not say about the towns but in villages, education is not spreading among the women. Rate of drop-out of girls in education is higher because if a boy and a girl of a family join school together, every care is taken to see that the boy continues his studies whereas in the case of girl, the parents would not mind if she drops out and stays at home for doing domestic chores. It will be very easy to break

[Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan]

the chains of wrong notions and customs prevailing in the villages and the women will join in the national development if they are educated in the real sense.

So far as equality is concerned, sometimes gross injustice is committed against women. Take for example, the case of Maternity Leave; Only three months leave is sanctioned whereas upbringing of the child is more important than giving birth. I would like to say that in order to become a good citizen, a child needs the umbrella of motherhood at least for five years. So it is necessary to reconsider the matter of 'Maternity Leave' after the commission for women is constituted. A law should be framed by removing all these draw-backs so as to make women capable in all respects. We support the Commission for Women Bill which has been brought forward keeping all these things in view. I would like this Commission to consider the points of fearlessness also. The para-military training to the women at village level is necessary so that they could defend themselves. But in a male-dominated society, nobody will pay attention to it. The women Commission may well understand the grievances and dangers before the women only when it acts firmly. Many women think that providing para-military training to girls is essential, and I am of the view that if the Women Commission agrees to it in principle, we can have a fruitful discussion in this regard. In the sphere of arts and sports there are many women who can make strides and can bring laurels to the country. But no special planning for their training, guidance and stipend is made. It is completely overlooked. I would like to say that necessary powers should be given to this Commission for Women. A short while ago the word "Chaprasi" was used here. Use of word "Chaprasi" Shows the mentality of treating the women just like slaves. Inferior words are always used in the matter concerning women. These words should not be used whenever talk about women.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: I have demanded a constitutional status.

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: You could say only this. But I would like to say that women have been treated as orderlys uptil now. During the last 40 years, there have been merely talks of women-development and committees were constituted for name sake, but nothing was implemented in this regard. Now in reality a commission for women is being constituted.... (*Interruptions*)

I would like to say one thing more. The activities of the Women Commission should not confine only to the national level its branches should be set up at the district level so that the problems of women may be considered in depth. Nothing can be done merely by constituting a commission at the national level with six women as its members. They should be equipped with powers as well. They should undertake country-wide tours in order to have first hand information about the problems of women. It is essential to set up the branches of this Commission at the State and district levels.

In the end, I would like to say that there are many laws for different crimes such as rape and taking dowry etc. There are provisions of punishment for committing such crimes. But as our friend Subhashiniji just said that her heart weeps when any case regarding rape on women is raised in the House because it is raised only to get political mileage. Merely making laws will not help. Unless men change their attitude and stop treating women as an object of enjoyment and decoration, she cannot be a self-confident, respectful and conscious participant in the all round national development. So we should support this Commission in this light and it should be given more powers so that we can say, "Sabla Bankar Likhi Ek Nayi Kahani, Man Mein Ho Vishwas Bani Swabhimani" instead of "Able Jeevan Ha Tumhari Yahi Kahani" which we are accustomed to quote.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): Sir, by introducing this Bill, the Government has brought up an important subject. We are well aware of the glorious position that women occupied

in our society and history. The whole nation is brought up in the lap of women, but their participation in running the nation and its development is negligible. A change is needed in this position. That is why we intend to bring the oppressed enchained class of the society forward when we talk of a change in the set up and it cannot be done just through Government doles. They will tend to stretch their hands like beggars dependent on the treasury for getting some of the Government aids, unless they get their share in governing the country and in its development

[English]

SHRIMATI UMA GAJAPATHI RAJU (Visakhapatnam) Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the Bill is being discussed, the Prime Minister is speaking and the people who want to speak are mostly men. Why can't women Members be allowed to speak? (Interruptions)

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER Please take your seat. I am standing on my legs. You will be given an opportunity to speak. You know that two lady Members have already spoken and the Hon Prime Minister is intervening and you would be interested in knowing as to what are the policies of the Government with respect to the all round development. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH. We wish that the women should not only get an opportunity to speak but their speeches should be forceful enough and we are making an effort in that direction..... (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI UMA GAJAPATHI RAJU: We shall speak if you give us strength. But an hon. Member of your party, Shri Kalyan Singh Kalvi had supported the practice of 'Sati'. (Interruptions).....

[English]

And you have Ch. Jagdeep Dhankar,

.....\*\*.....You are talking about women of India. I am very sorry to say that.....(Interruptions) ... .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER In trying to create order, I think. ...dis-order is being created. Please leave it to me. You just keep quiet

[Translation]

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH Keeping in view the problems being faced by the scheduled castes, backward classes, minorities and the poor, our approach is to give them some share in the governance of the country. Not that women lag behind in wisdom, spirit and ability but our system has been such that they have been repressed to be the most backward category of society. The Constitution guarantees equal right to women. But despite that, the fact remains that 75 per cent women are un-educated, their dropout rate at the primary level of education is 55 per cent and 90 per cent of them are engaged in the unorganised sector, of which more than 80 per cent are in the Agriculture sector alone. These are the conditions which go contrary to the provision in the Constitution. We are of the view that there should be constitutional mechanism to oversee the welfare, rights and various problems of the women where issues concerning them could be raised forcefully and effective solutions found thereafter. That is why we have brought this Bill on Women Commission today. In 1971, Shrimati Phoolrenu Guha had submitted a report of the "Committee on Status of Women in India". Two decades have since passed but no action has been taken on the report. It is matter of happiness that we are making a beginning in this regard today. We do not say that it will solve all the problems because for

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\*\*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

[Sh. Vishwanath Pratap Singh]

that we shall have to do many things but we are just building an edifice for it. We have vested enough powers in the Commission and Shri Ram Vilas Paswan will tell you about it in detail. The status of this Women Commission will be equivalent to the Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the powers of an Inquiry Commission are being given to it. Earlier, there were certain shortcomings in the Bill. The hon. Members raised their voice against them and we acknowledged that their voice had force behind it. We removed these shortcomings before the amendments of the hon. Members reached us.

I do not want to waste the time of the House. The main issue is whether we show the spirit of changing the present set up or not? Yesterday, we announced the decision to implement the recommendations contained in the Mandal Commission, Report. Many times the question of merit and efficiency is raised. The women too are victims of this plea. But have we ever considered the merit of a set up under which all people of certain classes are rendered handicapped and weak? So far we have considered only the individual merit. No doubt, the merit should not be overlooked, but at the same time, a change in the set up which perpetrates repression of many classes should also not be overlooked. If we continue to overlook the merit of such a set up and talk of the merits of the persons which are produced by this set up, it will not help. We, therefore, want to bring a fundamental change in the present set up. It is only a small step in that direction. I request you to give us your strength and support so that these people could get opportunities to make progress.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, although four hours have been allotted for this Bill, I would suggest let us continue the discussion till such time every Member in the list of speakers

gets an opportunity to speak on this Bill. (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have got the names of some 4 or 5 lady Members to speak on this subject. I will now call Kumari Mayawati to speak.

[Translation]

Mayawatiji, you are going to speak on other items also so please be brief.

KUMARI MAYAWATI (Bijnor): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as you promised yesterday that atrocities committed on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in different parts of the country would be taken up for discussion under rule 193, so I have to participate in that discussion also. So far as the question of National Commission for Women Bill is concerned, I want to state that I belong to a society in which the women have been insulted in all respects. I cannot take part in today's discussion on this subject, but the Hon. Prime Minister has given his statement on this Bill and, therefore, I would like to ask a question from him which relates to the women. He has mentioned about all women of the country but he has not mentioned anything about those women who are really suffering. Even today injustice is being done to them. They constitute 85 per cent of the populations and out of that 85, 50 per cent are women. But nothing has been said about them. Rape incidents have occurred in Madhya Pradesh and in Agra also. Perhaps the Hon. Prime Minister is forgetting that women have been given equal status in the Constitution and for that credit does not go to him. The credit goes to Baba Saheb Ambedkar who introduced this Bill in the Parliament as Law Minister on January 5, 1951 under the name of Hindu code Bill. Today we have different parties but at that time it was the monopoly of the Congress party and some Congress men did not allow the Bill to be passed in the House. Baba Saheb Ambedkar brought it for the upliftment of the women but when his views were not supported by the Parliament, he resigned as Law Minister on September 27, 1951.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mayawatiji, why are you not speaking on the Bill. This will not do because other members have to go.

KUMARI MAYAWATI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is my request. My question should be replied to.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Come to the Bill please.

KUMARI MAYAWATI: The Prime Minister has spoken on the women's Bill but he has not mentioned anything about the women belonging to downtrodden section of the society. Now only ten minutes are left so I will not be able to speak on this Bill today, but I would request the Prime Minister to give reply to my question in the House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mayawatiji, it is not time for that.

KUMARI MAYAWATI : Sir, injustice in being done and atrocities are being committed on the women belonging to Scheduled Castes and down trodden section of the society and I am talking about that (*Interruptions*). The nature of atrocities committed on the women belonging to upper classes are entirely different from the atrocities. Committed on women belonging to downtrodden section of society. Why do not you try to understand that difference? Being a representative of the Scheduled Castes, I would like to draw your attention towards it. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If all of you sit silent I would be able to control the House. Please keep silent. You please also sit down. Do not interrupt.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Why do you want to get involved in it unnecessarily.

KUMARI MAYAWATI: I do not want to speak on this Bill at present but it is really a

matter of regret that injustice is being done and atrocities are being committed on the women belonging to downtrodden section of the Society.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mayawatiji, one of your sisters has risen to speak, so you please sit down.

KUMARI MAYAWATI: The Prime Minister is sitting here so why does not he reply to my question? What happened at Shrivpuri? Thousands of women were raped in Agra so why the Prime Minister is keeping silence cover these incidents?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mayawatiji, your sister has risen to speak, so let her speak.

KUMARI MAYAWATI: Today I do not want to speak on it. I oppose this Bill. The purpose for which the Prime Minister has constituted SC and ST Commission.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: She has to go I did not stop you while you will speaking. Keeping in view the constraints of time, please help her and please sit down.

KUMARI MAYAWATI: I will obey your instruction. I am not speaking today on this Bill. I have sought a reply only from the Prime Minister. Why the Prime Minister is silent? Why he does not give reply about the atrocities committed on thousands of women in Agra?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: All that I have said is that we agree with the sentiments expressed by you.

KUMARI MAYAWATI: It is a question relating to the atrocities committed on the women belonging to the downtrodden section of the society. Why are you silent over it? Why you do not give reply in the House?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: You might not have heard. Please listen to me. Whatever you are saying I agree with

[Sh. Vishwanath Pratap Singh]

that. No injustice will be done to them. I do not disagree with the sentiments expressed by you, I fully agree with your sentiments. *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRIMATI UMA GAJAPATHI RAJU (Visakhapatnam): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for having given a woman an opportunity to speak today on the National Commission for Women Bill.

We have today a fraudulent Government. The Prime Minister would like to intervene in a debate that is meant for women and declare his views and before hearing them he has his say. Are the intentions of this Government noble? Are they true? Are they genuine? This is the question I want to ask. Since everybody in the other parties has made a political speech, I have decided not to make it. But I must make my point very clear. No. (i) is, we have in the Treasury Benches Kalyan Singh Kalviji who had supported Sati on the Doordarshan. No. (ii) is, we have Mr. Jagdeep Dhankar.....\*\*.....No. (iii) is Mr. Devi Lal as the Chief Minister of Haryana passed an infamous Bill which disinherits the women of their parents' inheritance. With this kind of people the Prime Minister waxes eloquent on the National Commission for Women.

If the National Commission for Women has to have any meaning, it has to have the statutory power. Secondly, its recommendations should be mandatory; thirdly, they should be implemented on a time bound frame; fourthly, I think there should be a redressal forum, a redressal cell which could deal directly, which will have judicial power, which will deal with everything immediately on a war footing. The Congress initiated.....*(Interruptions)*. Even today the men of this Parliament have no dignity, they do not listen when a lady speak. When you

do not listen when a lady speaks, how are you going to solve the problems of women? *(Interruptions)*. I want only to mention one thing that Indira Mahila Rozgar Yojana was initiated by our Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The 30 per cent reservation for women was initiated by Shri. Rajiv Gandhi. It is unfortunate that our Government is not in power today. I must congratulate Shri V. P. Singh for having brought this National Commission for Women Bill. As a woman, I support this Bill 100 per cent, but with changes. It must have statutory powers; all its recommendations should be mandatory and should be done on a time-bound phase. I would like to mention this that nobody is independent unless it has independent-minded people. The success of the Commission will depend on the type of people who head this body. If you again have political considerations and do not have the right, independent-minded people who would fight not with anybody but right with the Government, it would be meaningless. The battle lines are drawn not between the women and men; as is always, the battle lines are drawn between the Commission and the Government, the establishment. The Commission has to have the gumption to fight with the Government, whether it is 'A' Government or 'B' Government to see that its recommendations are completely and fully agreed with. Another thing I would like to mention is that there is a very gigantic and serious task before the Commission. We have to understand from the grassroots what is it that the Indian women want. All the time, right from 'Manu' always we have seen that it is the male who makes laws. We have laws and laws; legislations and legislations, dialogues and dialogues and debates and debates, but what is the outcome of these all. We have to see that the Indian women has a consciousness; we have to see that her consciousness is awakened and social awareness comes to the Indian women. Then, we can see that the National Commission for Women will be a catalyst to social awareness, a catalyst to social change. If the National Commission does not do this and if it does not have

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\*\*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

independent-minded people heading it, then this Commission is nothing but a hogwash, nothing but a whitewash and nothing but to placate the poor aggrieved Indian women to say that here are the few crumbs, take it and go. If the Prime Minister is serious, if the Prime Minister really wants to do something for the women of India, let him arm the National Commission Bill and the National Commission with statutory powers and see that all its recommendations are implemented on a time-bound frame. I did not want to make this a very political speech. I wanted the Prime Minister first to hear all the women, to hear the representatives of the women of India before he made his speech and before he made his submissions. I think, after we have all spoken, it would be nice for the Prime Minister can reply to everyone of us and to assure us that the women of India, tomorrow, will have protection from the Constitution and say that we can go to Court to get our rights.

SHRISONTOSH MOHANDEV (Tripura West) The Prime Minister is very obliging to the ladies. I think he will again intervene.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You want the intervention or the reply. The hon. Minister will reply.

SHRIMATISUBHASHINI ALI (Kanpur): Sir, I do not think we can allow this kind of patronising talk. I object to this.

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI HAMENDRA SINGH BANESA (Bhilwara). Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir before the discussion under rule 193 is taken up. I would like to give an important information to the House. In Jaipur, a School bus collided with a train and 8-10 children were killed in the accident. Our Railway Minister has not yet given any statement in the House in this regard. I would request him to make a statement thereon. *(Interruptions)*

16.00 hrs.

SHRI JAG PAL SINGH (Hardwar): I also support my colleague that such a big accident has occurred but till now no statement has been made in the House either by the Railway Minister or by his Deputy. Sir, Please direct the Government to make a statement.

16.01 hrs.

#### DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

#### Continued Atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Country

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, discussion under rule 193 to be initiated by Shri Ramashray Prasad Singh.

*[Translation]*

KUMARI MAYAWATI (Bijnor): I am on a point of order. Since it is the question of atrocities, it is a very serious matter. On this occasion presence of the hon. Minister of Home Affairs and the hon. Prime Minister in the House is very necessary. Both the hon. Minister of Home Affairs as well as the hon. Prime Minister have disappeared. We will not allow any discussion to take place in the House on this subject in their absence. I am on a point of order. It is a serious matter, because Shri V. P. Singh himself is a culprit in the Agra incident and this is the reason that he left the House. The moment matter under Rule 193 was taken up for discussion he left the House. He is himself the culprit in the case and was behind the incident. As such, the discussion should be started only when either of the two, the Home Minister or the Prime Minister, in present is the House.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): A clarification has been sought in the Rajya