

consideration and after showing due deference to the standing of these Parliamentary bodies.

Now, having made the point, I am happy that some of the recommendations were accepted. But still I personally do not feel very happy with the definition of the word "service". It appears to me to be very wide. This is just a feeling that I want it is easy to define 'goods' but it is rather difficult to define a 'service'. I know it is easy to define 'goods' but is rather difficult to define a 'service'. But the definition here is so broad that almost anything could be brought in anything related here is so broad that almost anything could be brought in anything related to its trade, to all its paraphernalia, to its financing aspect, to its public relation aspect, to its promotional aspect—almost anything could be brought in under the term "service".

What I am afraid of is that through these means we are opening the doors to services of foreign origin. Above all, our economy must resist the entry of foreign services because it is here that we are likely to be totally subdued and totally over taken. There are many goods which compete with the foreign goods and therefore even when you open the door, they could stand on their own and defend their standing in the field. But when you open the door to 'services'—particularly because we are so foreign conscious—in that case what will happen is, the nascent service within the country - whether they are in the field of public relations or whether they are in the field of advertising or whether they are in the field of promotion or in the financial or insurance sector— are likely to be overwhelmed. Therefore, I would rather say that you do not extend indiscriminate protection to services of foreign origin. That is what I would like to plead with you to kindly consider in the light of the Indian psychology. The Indian ethos today is very much— shall we say burdened with the foreign consciousness? Even a shirt bearing a brand mark of foreign origin is considered to be a matter of prestige. Although we might be able to produce equally good shirts of equally good textile within our country, yet if it carries the foreign brand name, it has a certain prestige value. This is because, globalisation is introducing into our country certain elements of consumer society, certain cultural certain elements of consumer society, certain cultural patterns, which I feel, in the long run, would be deleterious to the interest of the country. Therefore, under the guise or under the cloak or under the make of a purely technical law relating to trade marks or labels, we should not really— shall we say - encourage accelerate this process. I know we have opened the doors. But we should take protective measures; and we should try to change the psychology. I do not know whether we can change the psychology of the people or at least of psychology of the elite who are consumer, who are the basic customers of this foreign culture and this foreign goods and foreign brand names. Whether we can eliminated this brand

consciousness from the minds of the people. I do not know. Whether any Government can do it, I do not know. But at least I would request you not to aid this process; not to encourage this process. On the other hand, as one friend said here on the floor of the House, 'Be Indian, Buy Indian', should be promoted deliberately as a matter of policy by the Government.

On the one hand, as I have said, let the foreign goods and services enter India but only on the condition that reciprocal and equal measures of protection are available to our goods and services in those countries so that when we come of age, we can at least take advantage of them and to the extent that we can take advantage of them today we can. And on the other hand, let us try to preserve the Indian individuality, the Indian uniqueness perhaps the pride of being an India, the pride of being one of those or perhaps the only developing country which produces almost everything that society needs.

With these words, Madam, and with certain reservations I welcome the Bill.

16.30 hrs.

DISCUSSIONS UNDER RULE 193 Atrocities on Women and Problems Faced by them

MR. CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SANTOSH CHOWDHARY) : It is 4.30 p.m. and now we have to take up discussion under Rule 193. Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee to raise the discussion regarding 'atrocities on women and problems faced by them'

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura): Madam Chairperson, I thank you for giving me the opportunity at long last, though you are not responsible for that long last, for raising the issue of atrocities on women and problems faced by them.

On 12th August, 1990 I raised the same issue under Rule 193 where I said that I rise with a "bleeding heart and a burning shame". Today, nearly after five years, when I rise to move the same thing again, I do not know how to describe my feeling. If any word can at all be used to describe it, it is 'suffocating'.

The fact that atrocities on women are increasing constantly cannot be denied by any quarter. On 13th May, this year, *Anand Bazar Patrika*, a widely circulated Bengali Daily reported about a survey which said that in India today one woman is being raped in every 54 minutes...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum): A little more senior Minister should be here.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura): I hope, at least the Ministers who are in-charge of Home Affairs will listen that in every 54 minutes there is a rape taking place in our country.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHI P.M. SAYEED) : I am listening.

SHRI INDER JIT (Darjeeling): Mr. Sayeed is listening.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum). That does not prohibit other Members of the Council of Ministers to be present here.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED : Please do not interrupt

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI) : I am here and I am listening.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : I know that when the subject is this, it is not the Ministers alone and as far as Members are concerned, I will have to mainly address the microphones. That shows their feeling.

Anyway, let me come back to where I was. We know that even these figures are the tip of the iceberg. Such rape cases often go unreported due to the social stigma attached to the rape victims.

Another extremely disturbing feature in this respect is the proportion of the rape of minor girls which are on the increase. Even such inhuman case of a father raping his own child is taking place. Custodial rapes and gang rapes are also increasing. Of late, a number of cases of poor women, Harijan woman, being paraded naked on the streets as well as being gang raped have appeared in the Press and a number of such cases have been raised in this very House. The cases of sexual abuse of working women by their bosses or higher officials are not always reported in the Press. But I often hear such complaints from working women. Cruelties on women for extorting dowry and dowry deaths are also on the increase. Despite the fact that Police do not always take the complaints, let alone acting *suo motu* as provided by the law, the figures of dowry deaths given in an answer to a question in Parliament shows that in 1985, the number of dowry deaths were 837 and the figure went up to 5,817 in 1993.

Let us recall that this happened despite the excellent amendments to Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and Indian Evidence Act passed in the beginning of the present decade against extortion of dowry, for causing death to women for not being able to meet the demands of husbands and in-laws.

A description of the atrocities committed on women can be endless. I do not want to take more time for such an exercise.

Let us straightaway to the root causes of these and other kinds of atrocities as I see them.

- (1) Unequal status of women in every field in this male-dominated society;
- (2) The denial of political, economic, social, educational and medical justice to the vast masses of women in the exploitative structure of our society;
- (3) Constant depiction of violence in the films including those shown in the TV;
- (4) Increasingly invading vulgar and consumerist culture corroding the healthy social culture;
- (5) The neo-fundamentalist attacks in the name of religion which in reality nothing to do with genuine essence of religion;
- (6) The increasing patronisation of criminals by politicians as well as the rich.

If we all agree that it is the bounden duty of the decent people in our society, be they men or women then we have to wage a relentless battle in the spheres mentioned above

For that, first of all, let the parliamentarians — since at the moment no parliamentarians are there, at least their representatives — ask themselves do they do that always ?

If the answer could really be 'yes', then half the problems could have been solved.

Let us take the political field. Wherever one-third reservation of seats for women in panchayats and municipalities has been effected and the elections took place, it is seen that there has arisen a great upsurge among the women and they are trying to utilise their empowerment. Even then, are they getting the unstinted help of their families even when the family is political? Look at the Assemblies and Lok Sabha. How many political parties are setting up enough women candidates? Up to now, the proportion is very small considering that half the voters are women.

Let us take the social field. How many political leaders and cadres, let alone their followers, are coming out with a vow that they will not want dowry while getting their sons and daughters married or while they themselves are marrying? Unfortunately, not yet many. Then how shall we influence the situation obtaining due to dowry? Here, I must mention that in this field, we women ourselves must be vigilant that their behaviour while marrying their daughters and sons must be the same and as in-laws, they must not behave cruelly with their daughters-in-law. Unfortunately, that is not the situation now.

Let us take the economic field. Among the members of this House, there are a number of farmers. Can all

of them claim that they pay equal wages for equal work to the women agricultural labourers that they employ? How many of them fight for greater employment for women?

Can we claim that all of us have waged a relentless battle to eliminate violence from the small and big screen? Women MPs raised the matter on 9th March last year, but despite their attempts, the situation has not changed substantially. Can we claim that all of us are free from consumerist culture?

Certainly not. Can we say that all our political parties refuse to protect anti-social elements and all our parties are free from the act of criminalising politics? Certainly not. Unless we, the Parliamentarians, can change ourselves in these respects, effective fight against atrocities against women and the problems faced by them cannot be effectively fought

I, therefore, appeal to all in the House and those who are not present, I appeal to them through their leaders to ponder over these questions. I also appeal to all the political and social workers in the country to rise to the occasion to face this challenge. I am also sorry that the media is absolutely, practically absent. The media has a special role to play and I hope that that media will also take note of the fact.

Next, for dealing with the problems regarding atrocities on women, some new initiatives have to be taken. Some laws need to be improved. The National Women's Commission have suggested some such improvements. Some of my women colleagues in both the Houses have brought forward some non-official Bills. Those should be placed before Parliament and should be considered without delay. The non-official Bills should be considered without delay and the ones which have been recommended by the Commission should be placed before Parliament quickly. But the biggest problem is the implementation of laws. The good laws already existing are not being implemented properly. The National Commission for Women was formed with that purpose particularly, so that they can do the monitoring. Unfortunately even the National Commission for Women is now functioning only with two members and the rest have to be filled immediately. . . (Interruptions). Of course, there are only two official members and the non-official members are still to be nominated and it has no Chairperson

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI : One non-official member is there. One official member is there.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE . The non-official one is so non-official that practically he is not known to many of the small fries like us.

SHRI INDER JIT (Darjeeling) How many members are there?

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Seven. But my point is that this must be done. Further, the Commission

at the national level is not enough. At the State level, some States have formed it. So far so good. But some other States have not formed it. I feel very strongly that if this monitoring has to be done really in a country-wide scale, then, the district level Commissions will have to be set up and those district level Commissions may be asked to submit their report to the Municipalities and the Zilla Parishads which are elected bodies.

SHRI INDER JIT . At the district level, you should have a Committee, not Commission.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : I am coming to that. I am coming to another thing also. I am saying about the Commission. There is a person because people come to the Commission all the time. Even about the State level Commission, I am seeing that so many cases are coming to my notice

SHRI INDER JIT : Then, you call it Sub-Commission

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : You can call it Sub-Commission or Zero Commission or anything you like. The question is substantive (Interruptions) The question is that there should be a formal body which will have powers as the National Commission has. It is not that the National Commission has got big powers

Apart from that, the situation regarding the problem of pending cases can be understood from one example. Upto 1992, the number of people accused in pending rape cases in various courts of the country were 50127. Upto now, 80 per cent of the cases still remain pending. Only 34.4 per cent of the accused have been punished. As it is, the Police is generally not so active in taking up these cases. On top of that, if the situation in the courts remains as above, then, naturally justice delayed will be justice denied. Therefore, it is absolutely essential to spread a network of family courts in every State

The opening of women's courts is also necessary. The issue of opening of women's court was also being discussed in the National Commission. They want it. They had discussions with us also.

Sensitising the police and administration in relation to atrocities on women is one of the important steps. Unfortunately, we have still a long way to go in this regard. In some states women's cells have been established in some police station. This is to be expanded to all the police stations in every State. Moreover, Advisory Committees consisting of women's organisations and organisations working for social justice need to be formed to interact with the administration at all levels.

In the field of education, spread of literacy, general and vocational education, has to be spread much more. Legal literacy also has to be much more wide-spread. Constant campaign against fundamentalist and feudal attitude towards women have to be waged by both men and women. In this also, we must be much more active.

I particularly appeal to my male colleagues to come forward for all this. For this, I want to quote a famous line of a poetry by the Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam for them:

*"Konokale eka hoiniko joyee purusher tarabari,
Prerana dieche, shakti dieche, vijaylaxmi naree"*

It means, "victory was never achieved by the swords of men alone, the inspiration and the strength was always supplied by the women who are really the goddess of victory." This is true. There is no movement in India which ever became successful where women did not participate in a very big way. Therefore, whatever we want to do, this is absolutely essential.

Finally, I appeal to all my colleagues that all of them must rise above petty political considerations and act across their political view on other questions to act for justice to women, protecting them from atrocities and for creating conditions for their equality. On my political questions we may differ with each other. But when it is the question of women, we can unite if we rise above petty political considerations. This is my fervent appeal to the House, to all the Members in the House - some Members may not be present today but through their colleagues who are present here - that we shall not be able to face the situation without uniting together. If this discussion can appeal to the hearts of some of my colleagues who are at least present here, and inspire them in fighting for the above cause, in that case, I shall consider this discussion fruitful.

MR. CHAIRMAN. Thank you Geetaji, Now Mr. Charles, I want to tell you and others that the time allotted for this discussion is only two hours. There are quite a large number of speakers also.

SHRI A.CHARLES (Trivandrum) : Madam, I think, when you are in the Chair, I am sure, you will give sufficient time for this very meaningful discussion because after all when there is a crime against women, the women should be more concerned, not that the men are less concerned.

I must congratulate the hon. Minister Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee for bringing forward this Resolution to have a discussion on such a vital, important and social evil.

I have one more point on which I want to congratulate the distinguished lady Member of Parliament. I remember, I think, it was in 1986, she had brought forward another Resolution about the Progress of women in the International Decade of Women. It was she who initiated the discussion on that subject also.

I remember there was an embarrassing situation in the House. About 12 persons participated in the discussion. All the 12 were women. The then Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shri H.K.L. Bhagat ran about to find out whether there is any man who is willing to speak on this subject. Finally, he came to me. I said I was willing to speak. I paid glowing tribute to

the women who had played a great role in the building up of this nation. Women are the mothers; women are the real life in our home. At that time, I remember that I very emotionally expressed my appreciation of the great lady of the century, Indira Gandhi. She was the greatest lady of the century and this whole nation should be proud of her, for her great leadership and for guiding the destinies of the nation for several years. So, many contributions have been made by women in this great country. Even when we go back we can see a long line of illustrious persons, VIZ., the JHANSI KI RANI. We should be proud of them.

So, when we discussed on the atrocities committed on women, I feel we on this side have a greater responsibility to see that these atrocities are put to an end. What about the details of the crime committed against women? It is shocking. One statistical information given by the Crime Records Bureau is really shocking to the mind. The crime has doubled in the last one decade. A crime against women is committed every six minutes in the country; a woman is raped every 47 minutes; a woman is abducted every 44 minutes; one-third of our women is subjected to cruelty, either by their husbands or by their relatives, including in-laws and mother-in-laws; 17 dowry deaths are reported every day and in the last year alone, the total crime against women has gone up to 82,818. I think it is a national shame. It is a national shame not only on men, it is a shame on the whole society and on the whole community.

Coming to dowry deaths, it is a great agony that the main cause for the dowry deaths in many cases is women or the mother-in-laws or in-laws who instigate either the brother or the son to get more dowry from the poor women. What is the fate of those women? Recently in 1983, the law has been changed, I.P.C. has been amended, Evidence Act has been amended. But in spite of all these amendments to the laws, the position, I am afraid to say, has not substantially changed because more depends on the attitude of the society. The laws are stringent and the onus, in the case of sexual offence, especially rape, has been shifted to the male partner. In spite of that hardly few cases are reported and in those cases reported, the convictions are very very rare. So, the whole society has to come forward, and understand the magnitude of the offence. We have to create awareness that our women are respected and women are loved. Only with the social changes, I must say, not only the crime, but this great evil in the society, can be removed.

Madam, I feel that economic liberty of the women is very important. I am happy that the hon. Prime Minister is here and the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana, recently introduced has gone a long way to give employment opportunities to the educated youth, especially of rural areas.

I request that at least 50 per cent of this shall be exclusively reserved for women, so that our women in the rural areas can have the opportunity to start some self-employment, agro-based activity, so that they can also earn. It is often the economic subordination that is creating this evil. Illiteracy is another main reason for this perpetration of crime. In most cases the girl child is not given the opportunity for education. Education goes a long way in creating the social awareness. So also the sharing of political power. We speak a lot about it. I am happy in the Panchayati Raj, one-third of the posts of Panchayat members and Panchayat Presidents are reserved for them. That is a revolutionary change. The vision of Rajivji has now been implemented by the hon. Prime Minister. We are grateful to their leadership which have given greater power to women. Can we not think of getting one-third membership of the Parliament also reserved for women?...*(Interruptions)* I think Mrs. Gopalan will also support that because she come from a very great revolutionary family.

We all have concern for the motherhood. Just imagine the home without a mother. The whole life, the whole build up of the society is depending on the affection, the care, the love, the support of women. But, in spite of that, we think that they are the weaker sex, they have to be subordinates, they are here always to serve with a servitude mind. Our whole thinking has to be changed if proper liberation is to be given to women. So also in high places, in decision making bodies they have to be there. I am happy that, Madam, you have been a member of the Public Service Commission, you were the Chairperson of the Public Service Commission also. When a women occupies such a high place in the judiciary, in the public sector undertakings, in decision making bodies, if they are given the right place, their whole social status will rise. It happens only by strengthening them, by supporting them, not by making legislations alone. Legislations are enough. There are legislations with teeth which can be enforced. But in how many cases will they be able to go to the court of law? Even if they go to the court of law, the problem of getting the accused punished is very difficult. So, we have to create an awareness and give them the opportunity, so that our women shall be a great force along with men in the building up of the society.

I think it is high time that we not only speak and discuss about this, but we have to make decisions and implement them for giving education, for strengthening them by giving them economic liberalisation, by giving them political powers and by giving them place in the decision making bodies. It is often said that women are the salt of the earth because they are the ones who energise the life of the children, the family and the whole set of our society.

Madam, you are looking at me. So, with these few words I congratulate once again our hon. distinguished

Member, Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee for giving us an opportunity for this discussion. I think it is high time we make the legislation, implement it, make the social awareness, so that we may think of our mothers whenever legislations on women come.

17.00 hrs.

[Translation]

SMT. SUMITRA MAHAJAN (Indore) : Madam Chairman, this discussion here in the House on this subject has its own significance. It should not be taken otherwise. The discussion is regarding atrocities on women and does not mean that it is against men. We consider ourselves to be representatives of ten lakhs of people each. The leader of people means one who carries people alongwith him and guides the society. He also has the power to effect changes in the thinking of people. Unless we exchange our views on bringing down the rate of atrocities being committed on women and giving a new direction to the society, how can the discussion be meaningful on this subject? Thus, this discussion assumes great importance.

Years before we used to pronounce the words 'Stri' i.e. one who creates and 'Nari' i.e. one having no enemy. The women used to be held in high esteem then. With the pronunciation of these words when one feels proud tries to understand something and look up opening doors or one's mind, the suppression starts. We consider woman to be creator of society and inspirator of creations. But today when we pronounce the word 'Nari' our body shivers. The significance of the word 'Nari' has been rendered insignificant. When we discuss injustice against women, the things come back to square one. We hear about the efforts being made by people not to allow the birth of female foetus. Discussion continued for years to bring forward a suitable Bill in Lok Sabha on this subject, but no concrete implementation was perceptible. Atrocities on women start even before her birth takes place. Even after her birth her rights as a human being, as a female child and other rights in respect of food, health, education etc. are denied to her. If we go through the data of girl education, the drop out rate among girls in schools is coming down. The hon. Minister, Kumari Selja has readily admitted that the drop out rate is descending. If we go to villages and see the real situation. We would find that the rate of drop out among boys is not different than the girls. It manifests the extent of exploitation of children of both sexes. Reports in newspapers substantiate my point. At present, four lakh girls are engaged in prostitution. Out of 10,000 cases of rape 20% girls are found to be below the age of 10 years.

It shows that the atmosphere of child exploitation and insecurity prevails in our country. Leaving aside the cities, we had dreamt of a healthy environment in villages but how far we have been able to make it true?

The situation today is that girls cannot go alone to a distant place.

Environment in cities is vitiated and security of girls and ladies is a matter of great concern. Do we have such an environment in villages where a girl can go alone to see and enjoy the beauty of nature like sunrise, sky, sun-set, flowing river, rainy season etc. fearlessly? Even so many years after Independence, we have failed to bring about such an order in our villages.

If we say that today women have got equal rights with men in all matters and they have moved out for work, in reality, the percentage of such women is very small. The percentage of women working in unorganized sector or women agricultural labourers and workers may be more. But the position in regard to women working in other sectors is quite different. The reality is that we have such a mentality which makes us feel that no woman can work as an engineer. We shall have to find out the percentage of employment among women. There are examples of women who with strong determination and efforts have become engineers, drivers, pilots, etc. but these working women undergo great tests and hardships. Due to this mentality, they are subjected to numerous harassments including mental torture.

To talk of tortures in family, the ugly custom of dowry is on the increase day by day. It has many reasons behind it. Women are subjected to other types of family tortures also. Many a times the incidents of torture do not come to light. As of today out of 20 lakh girls below 19 years age 50 percent are married. It shows the extent of exploitation in our society. They are confined to the four walls of their house and are barred to speak in public. Several laws have been enacted for them but their benefits do not reach them. If we go into the past history, the reality of widows and childless women will come before eyes. Still, some greatmen of our country made yeoman efforts for amelioration of the condition of women. Mahatma Gandhi was one leading personality among them. With their sincere efforts, some awakening was seen among women who came forward and spoke fearlessly.

Madam, Raja Ram Mohan Ray also championed the cause of women. Today, a helpless widow or childless woman is charged with committing a theft or levelled as a witch. She is burnt openly and the Panchayat award the punishment of naked parading of her in public.

The problem of atrocities on women has been raised in the House time and again but the mentality behind rape of women is very disastrous and when it takes the form of mass and gang rape it assumes further dimensions. With a view to suppress a particular class or a community mass rapes take place and the women

become the ultimate victim. It is also happening in politics. When a woman is elected to Assembly/Parliament by defeating a person of bad character. She is made a victim of numerous tortures. Rapes are committed to suppress women and to take revenge against them. We talk entering into twentieth century but I feel, we are still living in a mediaeval age.

Madam, history tells that when foreign attacked India, they had a sword in one hand and a cup of wine in the other. Mass rape of Indian Women were committed by the invaders with a view to ruin India's image. Today there is no invader but due to our mentality, the incidents of mass rape are increasing. We see that man-father or brother or son or husband-achieves some high position, the woman feels proud of it. I feel to the contrary, When woman achieves some heights or hold high position, men should also feel proud of her and should not be jealous of her achievements, it does not happen? we shall have to change such a mentality. Unless it is changed, mass rapes will continue.

Madam, though police is a part of our society, their morality has gone down so much but that a judge had to comment "Police is an organised gang of criminals". We should introspect why such a situation developed in our society. The reason is not far to search. It is that when we misuse a force, Government or state machinery for our personal gain, particularly when the misuse is by an authority and once the habit of misuse is by an authority and once the habit of misuse develops, there is no end to it. That is why the judge had to comment adversely on police.

In earlier days people had confidence and belief in police personnel and whenever any girl moved out of her house her mother used to say to her daughters to seek help of police if any difficulty arises. But now we have to advise them not to enter that street or lane which is lonely and where a policeman is seen standing or strolling. This difference has come about during these years.

17.14 hrs.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

We will have to ponder over that why such a situation has come. Many such incidents happen today. Today Kashmir problem is there. Though, the situation is different, but it is the women who are the victims at the hands of terrorists. If you go to Doda, you will find that the women have been the target of the terrorist activities. They do not see as to whether she is Hindu or Muslim. For them it is sufficient that she is woman and she becomes their target. Whenever there is upheaval or disturbance anywhere and by any one in the society the evils of medieval age come to surface and women are victimised. Whether it is Kashmir or at the brick kiln in Aligarh. When anyone is to be exterminated from the society, there also woman becomes the victim of mass rape.

Our mentality towards woman is also one of the reason. When there is a rape case and the woman is taken for investigation by police, she again becomes victim of rape of police custody, it is evident from the incident happened in MP and more ironical; that the minister gives a statement that it is all right that the woman has been raped and compensation will be paid to her and if again she is raped, double compensation will be paid. We have developed such a mentality as if compensation is the price for rape, we should be ashamed of it. Law making is good, but changes will have to be made as and when necessary. Procedure of investigation will have to be changed and improved. I do not want to repeat what my hon. sister Geeta has said here. The suggestions given here will have to be pondered over.

Why all this happens? I feel two types of mentalities are behind it? It seems that we have taken wrong meanings of some words and thereby a woman suffers from inferiority complex. It is not that only men are at fault. Pandit Salwatokar gave beautiful meanings of some words, for example 'Athaham' means 'limitless' by adding 'Aa' before that, similarly 'Aparampar', 'Aparimit' which means great power. Similarly the word 'Abala' should mean 'having limitless power'. Why the meaning of 'Abala' is taken as 'Durbal'(weak)? It does not mean she is 'Nirbala-without power', but it means 'she has enormous power'. In 'Durga Saptashati' there is a shloka in which mother goddess says that as to what kind of husband she would like.

She says that :

"Yo me jyeshyati sangramme,
Yo me Darpo vyapahati,
Yo me Sambalo Loke,
Same Bharta Bhavishyati."

It means that :

One who will be victorious name in battle.
Who will kill my pride and ego.
who will be equal in strength.
he will be my husband".

I, therefore, feel that a woman is not weak, but embodiment of strength or power. By giving meaning to the word 'Abala' we have created a complex of inferiority in the minds of women, because man wants to dominate over her by becoming strong and powerful. That is the reason why she is being tortured, victimised and atrocities are being committed on her.

Such a situation can be changed by giving her certain rights, by changing law, and rousing conscienceness and compassion of the society. Till when there is no use of giving rights alone. Not only, myself, but Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has also remarked the same thing in the case of minorities that you can give rights

to anyone but mere giving rights will not suffice. He said that :

[English]

"Rights are protected not by law but by the social and moral conscience of society. If social conscience is such that it is prepared to recognise the rights which the law chooses to enact, rights will be safe and secure. But if the fundamental rights are opposed by the community, no law, no parliament, no judiciary can guarantee them in the real sense of the word."

[Translation]

This consciousness and awakening will have to be generated. He further stated in experiences of united Nations as under :

[English]

"In spite of all this, it is generally realised that a real guarantee for the present preservation of human rights, civil liberties and fundamental freedom lies in the level of consciousness of the common man and in people to people relationship on the sound basis of international understanding."

[Translation]

Several other great personalities have also expressed such ideas that it is all right that we can make an institutional frame-work. But the feelings, thoughts and mentality of the society are also needed to be changed and upto when this is not done no improvement can take place. By only changing institutional frame work you can not achieve this goal place. We should discuss not only the atrocities, but also changes in the social framework today and direction to which our society is moving. Today, even the concept of family has also changed, it has not remained as an institution rather disintegrated. Maximum production, equitable distribution and restrained consumption, was the motto of our Indian life. But now we are gradually adopting western culture and adopting a foreign base which is guided by the theory of 'social contract'. Our's is not social contract theory. We admit a person is a part of the society, a person has some duty towards society that by developing himself he has to give something to the society, 'All is one' feeling is to be adopted, for that, we shall have to rise above political consideration of selfishness, mere law making will not serve the purpose. We see here that when a case of rape on a Harijan woman is raised here, caste feelings are surmounted by a political party and the matter becomes very sensitive. When a woman is tortured or humiliated or molested, she is woman, whether she belongs to any caste or religion, it is an attack on the 'mother power' we should adopt this feeling so as to put an end to atrocities on women. The man committing a rape gets acquitted. Feeling should be that the woman is not at

fault. But fingers are raised on the woman who is the victim. Therefore, the things happened in Jalgaon or Delhi or elsewhere have become common these days. When such things are concealed, it arises in mind why she did not have confidence, why mother and daughter did not have affection for each other. Why mother could not timely understand the situation.

But can the mother even after understanding the position, say boldly to the society that her daughter was not at fault? Can she move along with her daughter and say that her daughter was the victim? Whether the society will punish the culprit and make the guilty man have his head down with shame and admit his fault? Will the society despise him for his ill-act? Unless there is a complete change in the mentality we may discuss here any number of times, nothing substantial will emerge and the situation will remain the same. Reservation and Rights for women and a law made in her favour will not go to achieve the desired result, so long we do not bring a change in the social outlook for womenfolk.

But, much can be achieved by these steps. When women develop their determination, will power, capacity to take decision and there is political will in the nation in this regard, things will change. By enactment of this Bill more women should be able to occupy positions of decision making and be powerful enough to withstand the present situations and causes underlying it. I feel, it is necessary to provide more power to women so as to enable them to ameliorate their pitiable condition by determination, will power and capacity to fight against onslaught being made against them.

SHRIMATI SANTOSH CHOWDHARY (Phillaur) : I congratulate and thank Smt. Geeta Mukherjee for raising this discussion under Rule 193 regarding atrocities being committed on Women.

I have been witnessing in this House that some discussion takes place, as and when there is a happening or atrocities on women anywhere in the country. Women did not get independence completely even after attaining freedom from Britishers. In spite of fervent appeals made and views expressed by greatmen in this House, the situation instead of improving has deteriorated further. I am very sad and sorry over it. Representatives of people bring here and discuss burning problems of people, but we have not been able to solve any problem. We shall therefore resolve to develop strong will power for ensuring solution of burning problems of people.

Ours is an independent country. Republic day is celebrated every year. Independence does not mean that anything in mind should be done. Condemn such a mentality that allows atrocities on women and forbids any solution of it. How such a person can be called as an Indian who does not have even any feeling and knowledge of his Indian culture and heritage. Many

cultures and mutual harmony between different cultures have taken birth here. Today such a situation has come that we do not use our wisdom to understand the causes of atrocities being committed on women. The evils of orthodoxy, casteism, Parochialism and communalism etc. have closed our brains and we cannot utilise our brain when atrocity is committed on women. That is why we have been unable to put an end to atrocities on women. It is a great social disease. A victim of atrocity may become mad, well-knit family gets broken and looked down by the society, such incidents generate communal riots and several innocent persons have to lose their lives. Such a cancerous disease will ruin the entire society. We are greatly concerned and agitated over it.

All of us know since when atrocities started on women. Its roots are hidden in the history and can be located. Women are tortured due to poverty, ignorance, helplessness, dependence or others, starvation and similar other factors. There are various types of atrocities and today also it is present in a changed form.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, who are the people who commit atrocities on women? They are those people who are brainless, can be excited and made to indulge in wrong acts and whose tendency is of base type and who can be made to kill or do such heinous crimes, can commit atrocities on women. This is human tendency of man when aroused or aggravated or excited, can be very dangerous. People having more money, more power are prone to commit more atrocities on women. Atrocities are also committed due to social discrimination, personal enmity, political influence, wrong use of police force, bait of dowry, drug addiction, co-education, ignorance of head of family, misuse of Government help and machinery, inferiority complex, ignorance to all small events etc. In every family, some quarrel between husband and wife takes place. Husband beats his wife with hand, stick legs etc. and wife tolerate all such tortures and proud of being an Indian Woman. Women are confined to the four walls of house only the woman is doubted. Women have not been given their due place in the family.

Such incidents take place not only in the poor and uneducated families but rich and educated families are also equally affected by this. Though, poor and Harijans women are the worst sufferers. But nobody has ever cared to think over it that atrocities on woman is a blot on a family, society and the nation.

The hon. members, who expressed their views have termed rape as a heinous crime. Even the innocent girls and old ladies are raped. Harijans and poor ladies are worst sufferers. Those who oppose it are crushed and done to death.

Reports about killing of women by dousing them with kerosene appear daily. Brides are killed by mother-in-law, brothers-in-law and others. Such reports about men seldom appear. Daughter, Daughter-in-law took

poison and die. No one cares why she took such a step. No living creature can tolerate pain even of one pinch of a needle. Why do the women die suffering such a grave pain? The torture they face, compel them to put an end to their lives. India's prestige will go down abroad till such atrocities are continued on women"

India is a developing country. If atrocities on women are not stopped by appropriate measures. We shall be doomed as dead and our prestige will be spoiled in the World Community.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, most of the atrocities are committed on poor and Harijans women, which society has embraced Harijans? They are considered low people. Their women are tortured and misbehaved. Poor, Harijans and rural ladies are subjected to all kinds of atrocities at the hands of mosqueraders of the society. Since they are working outside their houses, in fields, and elsewhere, they are put to innumerable troubles and raped at will, because they are helpless, poor and not powerful enough to oppose and they have seen results of opposing in total ruination of their homes and families. Only ladies have to tolerate tortures of the entire society. This is a very shameful state of affairs and should be set right quickly.

This issue of atrocities on women must have been discussed in the House by great leaders and members many a time. But it is misfortune that even after 47 years of independence women are not independent more are they free from this heinous crime, which has been on the increase every day. There are so many reasons and we will have to do something to put an end to these. I support the views expressed by Smt. Sumitra Mahajan in this regard. I being a lady had the opportunity to serve the Public service commission as Member and Chairperson for six years each. I belong to scheduled caste. But I say that I had to wage a great struggle before I got that coveted post and I had to suffer a number of mental tortures and humiliations. I faced them boldly and advanced further. I say that if our mental outlook becomes correct, this problem will get solved.

We say many things in this House everyday and probably because of the Vote Bank. The ground reality is quite different. It has been written in Shastras that woman is goddess, but in practice she is not treated as such that is an unfortunate part of it.

All the members here should resolve to solve completely this serious problem of atrocities on women. First of all, mental outlook should be corrected and changed. Law is also essential for the purpose and the law must be made applicable sternly and stringently. The main problem arises after an atrocity is committed on woman how to go to Police Station and get first information report registered there. If an F.I.R. is registered, police personnel harass the lady frequently

at her house and call her in the Police station for investigation or the like. Such things are rampant in rural areas. I belong to Punjab and I can say that it is not correct that position of womanfolk is very good there. I come from Punjab and to say that the position of woman there is good is not correct. I read in some newspaper that data have been collected and it has been found that their condition is very pitiable there. The main reason of that is drinking of wine. For that we all can try to find out some solution.

Sir, I urge upon all the members of this House belonging to every political party to resolve to put an end to this problem of atrocities on women completely. Womanfolk must come to know that they are not bereft of the independence achieved and that they have all rights of protection against any kind of atrocity or torture against them. With these words I conclude my speech offering thanks to the Chair.

[English]

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN (Chirayinkil): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a subject which we have discussed several times in this House. In 1980s, the women's organisations fought in Bombay against certain existing laws following the Mathura case in Bombay. They fought for a change in the Criminal Law. We had joined many organisations and had many struggles. We had fought against dowry deaths.

Then, two Select Committees were constituted. I had served in both the Committees. Those Committees have made several recommendations for changes in Criminal Law and they were fully accepted. After that a legislation was enacted.

As far as Dowry Prohibition Act is concerned actually, the Congress Party was not bold enough to accept the unanimous recommendation made by the Committee constituted for bringing forward amendment to anti-dowry law. I still remember that we had picketed before this Parliament House and we were taken into police custody. The Magistrate heard our case. They told me : "You have committed a grave mistake. You have committed a crime because you did not allow the Members of Parliament to go in. That is a big mistake. You are fighting for a noble cause. So I free all of you and I also wish them success in your endeavours." He thought that by passing this legislation, something could be done. But what is happening atrocities on women are increasing day by day.

I have a Parliamentary publication with me. It says in 1985, 6355 rapes were committed and in 1993, 17,242 rapes were committed. In between, there are so many figures but I do not want to read those figures. In 1985, 15160 molestations were committed and in 1993, 20,925 molestations were committed. In 1985, 8440 kidnappings and abductions took place and in 1993 11,837 kidnappings and abductions took place. In 1985, 635

dowry deaths took place and in 1993, 5870 dowry deaths took place. In 1985, 3531 cases of eve-teasing were registered and in 1993, 12,809 cases of eve-teasing were registered. What is happening to the convictions? In 1992, the dowry deaths reported were 129, in 1993, the dowry deaths reported were 127. In 1994, the dowry deaths reported were 146. In 1992, 1993 and 1994, the dowry deaths casualties were zero.

The pending cases are respectively 124, 112 and 106. The rest are acquitted or cancelled. The figures for Delhi for the year 1994 are 284, 315 and 309 respectively. The convicted cases for 1993 and 1994 are two and zero respectively. The pending cases are 228, 238 and 248. The rest are acquitted or cancelled. The reported cases for 1993 are 809, 946 and 982 respectively. In 1992 no one was convicted, in 1993 only one person was convicted and again in 1994 nobody was convicted. So, what is the use of registering cases? Enough laws are there. But everyday the atrocities are increasing due to callous attitude of the administration. I can cite you several examples. Recently in newspapers we read about a case involving an Under Secretary in the Home Department raping his own child. He was arrested. But the girl has named four other people from the Home Department. Have you taken any action against them? I know several other cases. When I went to Rohtak, I was told about a murder of a married woman, Poonam of Katura village of Sonapat District. Her body was recovered one month after her disappearance. But no one was arrested. She went to the field and did not return. Everybody knows who did that. But no one was arrested. No action was taken. Dr. K R. Punia, the former Minister of Haryana had led a delegation a fortnight ago to the Union Home Minister and held a protest demonstration in Delhi. What has happened to that? Did you take any action? We ourselves brought several cases to the notice of the Home Minister. But action is not taken. I brought one case to the notice of the Railway Minister. In that case the person was not punished but the girl was transferred. I do not think there is any use talking in this Parliament. There is a 30 per cent reservation for women in panchayat institutions. Have you implemented it? In Kerala no election has taken place. There would not be any panchayat elections where Congress is ruling. Is it not? What is the use of giving this 30 per cent reservation?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum) : We are committed to panchayat institutions. In Kerala panchayat institutions came into existence twenty years ago. The first panchayat elections took place in 1952 and all along the panchayat institutions are working there. Panchayat schedule had been published.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN (Chirayinkil) : I am talking not only about Kerala but also about several other States...*(Interruptions)*

What was the difficulty in conducting elections ?

MR. SPEAKER : Mrs. Gopalan, in almost all the States, I think the law has been amended and under the amended law elections have taken place and the ladies have got themselves elected to the offices. This is a fact. Let us check it. You can check it.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN (Chirayinkil) : They may come but one year has passed. Within that time why elections were not held?

MR. SPEAKER : It is done, Madam. You check up.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN : I may tell you that in Zila Councils women were given 30 per cent reservation...

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI : Not only 33 per cent of women have been elected in Taluka Panchayats and Zila Parishads but there are a number of women Chairmen who got elected. We have conducted awareness camps for such ladies to make them aware of the existing laws and constitutional provisions through legal literature manuals. They are working very well.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN : In Karnataka it was formerly there. At the time of Janata Dal Government, reservation was given to women and it was working. Those Panchayats were dissolved when Congress Party came to power. That is also a fact. I know it because it is our neighbour State and I go there quite often. So that was functioning very well long ago, even before the Panchayati Raj Resolution was passed. In Kerala Zila Councils 30 per cent reservation was given but all the powers of the Zila Council were taken away. So I am saying whatever legislation is passed that is actually not being implemented.

What about employment and empowerment of women? How can we give them employment? One of the important things for women is to give them employment. About 90 per cent of our women are working in the unorganised sector and 70 per cent in agricultural sector. How are we going to save them? This is only possible if the land legislation is done. How are you going to help the rural masses without land legislation?

Otherwise, production will go up and that will go to the funds of the big landlords. What is happening in the rural areas in North India? Have you even implemented land legislation? What is the state of affairs of Adivasis and other sections of the society? They are suffering. The important thing is to give them land. That is not given. Unless that is done, there is no way out to improve their position in the countryside. No labour legislation in that way is also implemented where women are working more.

I went to Rohtak today where 23 people, including 13 women and six children, died yesterday. What about labour legislations? Do the Labour Inspectors go there?

All labour laws are violated where women are working. How can you say that you are helping the women? There should be a political will to implement them.

The economic status of women is also very much important. For that steps have to be taken. Even in Razgar Yojna how many women are benefited? We can see it in the Standing Committee Report also. How it was being implemented? Just by presenting it, it can not be implemented. So for women employment is the biggest criteria for saving them from atrocities.

What is happening in advasi areas? In Vainad area, I know the condition of unmarried mothers. We have taken up their cause I am working in that area also. But what is happening there? The O.W.A Cost is demanded. But did the Government come to help them. I wrote to the Central Minister also. Let there be some attempt to help them.

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI : Would you yield, Madam? Shall I explain to you the employment point? What about Jawahar Rozgar Yojna where we are giving 40 per cent reservation to women under this scheme? What about Mahila Samridhi Yojna which were have introduced very recently and how many ladies we are employing under that? What about Rashtriya Mahila Kosh where lakhs of women are being given employment? What about Anganwadi Scheme where lakhs of women are being employed? Our Prime Minister was kind enough to universalise this programme. So, we wanted to cover the entire country within a period of two years. There are 12,500 creches already working in the country. We have opened a National Creche Fund, and yesterday only I replied it on the floor of the House. All these are coming one after the other to create employment for women

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN : I am prepared to talk about all these things. How it has benefited the women? What percentage of women has been benefited by these? What is the state of affairs of these schemes? How it has helped to women?

I am prepared to discuss all these things including Anganwadi workers. When I say all this, the Speaker will not allow me to talk. What is their fate? How many hours are they working? You will have to take certain steps for them. The women, who were working in the fireworks factory, went with their small children, one-year and two-year old children, were burnt. Is there any creche for them? Only 12,000 creches are there in the country. Are you prepared to increase the number of creches? That is what I ask. So, several things are there. Legislations have to be implemented. Conditions have to be created. Actually, the cases of rape and other atrocities are taking place on Harijan women, Advasi women and also on those who are poor. In order to prevent this, so many things have to be done. Are you prepared for a proper discussion on these things? I am prepared to talk on each and every aspect

of the project that you have been implementing. And that, is only going to serve the purpose. I can tell you that many things are there. If this Government has a political will, it can do many things. Women's Commission is there. What has been done with regard to that? Have you implemented their recommendations? The Sexual Assault Bill was drafted by the Women's Organisations jointly and submitted it to the Women's Commission and the Women's Commission in turn had submitted very early to the Government. What have you done about it? Out of the three cases of rape, which were reported in Delhi, two cases were minor children. What have you done with regard to these cases? You are complacent about it? We will have to go into each and every aspect of it. I am working in the Women's Organisation also. So, I know what is actually happening throughout India. But you are not implementing laws. Without a political will, you can never help and you will never be able to implement these laws, the atrocities on women will increase. That is going on increasing and no solution will be found out. Also because of the New Economic Policy culture that is generating in the country is one of the reasons for increasing the rape and other atrocities on women. What is happening even in the cities? I had complained to Shri Pilot one case. Some girls, who were studying in Jamia, have to go during night for their course and they were staying in a House. When they went into the House
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Madam, please let me know how much time would you need because we would like to identify the problems and we would like to suggest the solutions also and that would take the discussion in a correct direction. Otherwise, you know, there are problems and cases. If we go on discussing them, there may not be enough time for us.

(Interruptions)

SHRI A. CHARLES : Sir, this is a social evil and she is making a political speech, which is very unfair.
(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN : It is political also because criminalisation in politics is increasing....(Interruptions)

SHRI A. CHARLES : We also share her concern. I also spoke on this subject...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN : I know these cases. Criminalisation of policies...(Interruptions)

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN : Madam, do you mean to say that all these atrocities are done by the Congress people and the Congress Government is protecting the culprits etc.? If that is your intention, then I am not agreeing with you... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : These problems have to be dealt in the States. In the States different Governments are working and they belong to different parties. It is not a

question of one party or the other party or the other Government...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN (Chirayinkil): Certain principles have to be evolved.. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum): Sir, it is perfectly right, as she also suggested, that we should try to have an approach, which is non-partisan. But to equate non-partisanship with non-politicalness, I mean, would be a mistake.

18.00 hrs.

All these problems are rooted in the political and economic structure and we have to look at it that way.

MR. SPEAKER : Let her take her own lines she wants to take She has a right to take her own line

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : It is not independent of politics. Certainly we should try to divorce it from political partisanship which is a different matter altogether.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN : Mr Speaker, Sir, criminalisation in politics has also aggravated the atrocities on women because, in any crime, criminals are being protected by the politicians. Are you prepared to take out your hands from there? Will you take an oath that you will not protect the criminals? Our political leaders want goondas with them in their work. Is it a correct thing? I am telling this out of practical life. Can any Party do that? Are you prepared to take a decision that you will not support criminals? Then we will deal with them. It is an uneasy thing. Let an awareness actually be created among the people. We are also doing this but the Government has to come forward.

MR. SPEAKER . I think, this is Six o' clock now. We should sit for some more time so as to conclude the discussion on this point. So please be on points. Let us point out what are the problems but suggest what solutions can be found so that the discussion is fruitful and useful.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN : So, in these things, several things have to be done. The legislation that we have passed is not fully implemented and several other legislations are needed because even now women are being treated as second-class citizens in our country. Is Hindu law fully helpful to women? Several things have to be changed in the Hindu law. Have the women got the Coparcenary rights? In fact, in many States, it is not there. The women have no full property rights and custody of children. In so many other things, we are not equating them. Do not say that any other law - whether it is Muslim law or Christian law - is equating them. All laws are discriminating the women. So a non-partisanship view should be there. We have to impartially look at it and legislate laws on all these things. Our Constitution envisages that step by step we should go for equality of law. But what have you done? Instead,

we have gone backwards. I am not going into that again because there will be controversy.

Instead of that, are you prepared to have, at least, the registration of marriages? If, at least, the register is there, there will be some record. One by one, after creating the conditions, we can go to a common law. But the present position is not like that. We have also recommended several other laws and the Cr. PC 125. Actually I myself have introduced a Bill here but because of ballot system, it is not coming and we could not debate it here. On that, Maharashtra State has made an amendment raising the ceiling. West Bengal has raised it to Rs.3000/-. In Bombay, there is no limit to that. But what is the law we are introducing? Here the ceiling limit is Rs.1,500/-. Parliament has to review the whole law and make amendments to that. Several other laws are there to protect the women. They have to be taken up.

Factory legislations have to be implemented properly. Children are working in hazardous industries. What is the position there? I accept that this should be implemented in a non-partisan way. But certain conditions have to be created. The most important thing is to improve the poor economic status of women. To improve that, certain measures have to be taken. Land legislation is one of them. Regarding other things, such as giving employment and all that, including Rozgar Yojana and how it has benefited the women, so many reports have come. Even our own experience is there. But are you prepared to mend or rectify the mistakes and then implement it? Then only, we will be able to do something because it is a very vast subject.

It is a very vast subject. I hope one by one, all these legislations will have to be redrafted and then introduced again.

As far as atrocities on women are concerned, we have a number of recommendations. There should be Committees in the police stations and in the DSP's head Offices. There can be an Advisory Committee comprising of women organisations. We can appeal to that and if any mistake is committed then we can correct it also. This was a long pending demand. How much has been done in this regard?

So, there should be a joint effort to rectify all these things. Then only we will be able to change the position.

MR. SPEAKER : I think Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal and one or two gentlemen also should speak. It is not only for the ladies to speak.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Please allow me to speak for five minutes.

MR. SPEAKER : Certainly. May I request that this is an opportunity given to us to discuss as to what are the problems, also to discuss what solutions can be found and if we do not do that and if we discuss the individual cases, probably we will reach nowhere?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shrimati Girija Devi's name is there and she will certainly speak. Now, Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal will speak.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh): Sir, traditionally Indian society has accorded a very high pedestal to women. Her position and role as mother, as sister, as consort are all treated as sacred and perhaps it is only Hinduism where women are worshipped. We have goddess of knowledge.

MR. SPEAKER : St. Mary is also worshipped

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : I stand corrected. Despite the fact that the position accorded to women is indeed very high in our society, yet it is a sort of contradiction that because of the social taboos, women continue to suffer under the shadow of a traditional and conservative society with high illiteracy, ignorance taboos and orthodox beliefs.

It is in this context, it would be pertinent to refer to what the Women's Conference in Calicut, a few years back has observed. I quote:

"A women faces violence from the time she is conceived in the womb. Amniocentesis is the latest technical way of murdering female children before they can fight back and the implications are far worse because the mother is coerced through all the available social and psychological pressure on her. Her home is the main area of attack. Drunken husbands, dowry hungry in-laws, financial problems and young female children deprived of nutrition exemplify the force with which a woman is attacked within the four walls of her social haven."

Sir, the exploitation of women, the assault on her, whether physical or mental, is only a symptom of malaise that lies within the social structure.

The forms of atrocities against women take many forms and are perpetuated in varying degrees of harassment and intimidation. That is the position of her whether it is at home or at workplace.

Very eloquently, reference has been made to the rising incidence of rape, molestation and other forms of crime against women. Though we have the figures of the number of rape cases in the country, yet it is a common knowledge that a large number of rape cases go unreported for the simple reason that the victim fights shy of reporting the same, for the reason that there is an indelible stigma attached to it. It is perhaps the only crime where it is the victim and not the offender who is looked down upon by the society.

Faced with harassment, shame and humiliation, in a very large number of cases, the victims of rape do not venture out to even report. And that is precisely the reason why we come to the conclusion that despi...

fact that over the years, very many meaningful amendments have been made to different provisions of law, whether those be of the I.P.C. or the Cr.P.C., yet the position continues to be as pitiable as it ever was. We have a provision that post mortem has to be conducted by a team of two doctors, that no-objection certificate can be given by the police only after the body has been identified, has been seen by the close relatives of the victim, yet we do come across cases where lacunae in law really hamper the delivery of justice. There are cases which one does not have to be an expert to find out that the poor victim, the girl, has been strangled to death by the greedy in-laws and thereafter the body partially burnt, yet the experts in the courts of law argue and hold that the guilt has not been proved against the accused. If we really mean business, it is time that we must set up specialised tribunals dealing with cases involving murder or attempted suicide in case of women, as we have been doing the various other cases, and such tribunals should have as its members, judges, as also distinguished social workers. The strict letter of law should not come as an impediment in the final dispensation of justice.

Education is an important agent and an important catalyst in according equality to women and to make them aware of their rights. Education plays an extremely important role in removal of gender stereotyping and discrimination. Education can bring about the much needed change in attitudes and social structure, including that of the family. It is heartening that the education policy which, at times, is adversely commented upon by some of our hon. Members, lays greater emphasis on providing education to women, as also providing legal education to them.

Sir, the need of the hour today is to sensitise the planners, the policy-makers and the enforcement machinery about the role that women have to play in society, about the place that women have in society and in this context I must congratulate you, as also Geetaji, for this discussion in Parliament today. I am sure, this would go a long way in bringing about the desired result. May be at times, we go astray, in our zeal to be what we always are, that is to criticise each other, to find fault with various matters. But, by and large, I am sure, this discussion today would enable us to focus on a very important issue which, despite the fact that various measures have been taken by the Government from time to time, continues to haunt us, continues to bring about a bad name to our society.

I know that the incidents of rape in even developed countries - if you go by the number of rapes per lakh population - may be high. But, somehow, given the position where in over 54 per cent of the cases rape is committed on young, innocent girls of the age of 7 to 16 years, and even below 7 years, I think it has to make us sit up and think about it as to where the malaise lies and what has got to be done about it.

I think the National Commission for Women, is one important step in fighting the malaise that afflicts our society. I know it does not have the teeth which we would wish it to have. But, nevertheless, I think some useful work is being undertaken by the Commission because it has a specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women. It looks into specific complaints as well and I think if this Commission were to work on a day-to-day basis an environment could be created where attention could be focussed to atrocities committed against women, to problems faced by women and we in the Parliament and in the State Legislatures would be well advised by the Commission to bring about necessary amendments wherever required - not only amendments but plug the loopholes, to fill the lacunae which often enable the guilty to go unpunished when they commit crime against women

I know the most important thing that can be done to bring down the incidents of crime against women is women empowerment. That is the structural change I was referring to when I used the word earlier. And a major and very bold step has been taken in that direction despite cynicism by many people. That was to make reservation of not less than one-third of seats for women in the local bodies and Panchayats. I would not really doubt what has been said by hon. Member Shrimati Gopalan. But I think it may be only initially that in certain States time-limit may have been ignored in setting up the local bodies. But I am sure that given the mandate in those two revolutionary constitutional amendments we - and anybody for that matter - will not be able to put off elections to those bodies for very long. May be, there was a lacuna that the six months condition does not apply to the initial constitution of a Panchayat or a municipal corporation. But I am sure slowly and slowly elections are taking place and women are getting their due and women are getting the right place in society and they are getting an opportunity to play their role of leadership in the society.

Sir, a beginning has got to be made whether it is in poverty alleviation or in training women for self-employment. The programme announced recently by the Prime Minister, that is, the Mahila Smridhi Yojana may not catch the fancy of some people, but, I think, Sir, this is a revolutionary step, given the resource constraints that we have, given the level of poverty that we have in the rural area. This is a measure where our women, in their own name, start an account in a Post Office and if they deposit a sum of Rs.300/- in a year, the Government contributes another Rs.75/-. Sir, people may consider it to be a small step, but this is a very significant step. So far, the grouse was that the mother of the child cannot go to the branch of a bank in school and deposit the fee in the account as the account had to be opened in the father's name. This is a revolutionary departure from that. A woman can open an account in

her own name and deposit that money and earn the subsidy thereon.

Similarly, there are schemes like the Development of Women and Child in Rural Areas, STEP, NOPAD, etc. I am sure, Sir, that given the determination of the government, these problems which have been faced by women over the years would be sorted out. To conclude, I would only say, Sir, that in granting equality, not women in the society, well meaning voluntary organisations run by women have to be recognised and encouraged to play a greater role. One major activity which such organisations have taken up at different places is the running of Short Stay Homes for women in distress. Much more could be done through them.

Sir, it is the bringing together of the efforts of the governmental agencies and the non-governmental voluntary organisations which could go a long way in helping women in distress, in bringing to public notice, to public gaze the atrocities unleashed on women. I am sure that if the voluntary organisations are encouraged we will be able to attain greater success. With these words, I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

MR. SPEAKER: Now Girija Deviji will speak. Girija Deviji, we are discussing this matter after a long time. We waited, waited and waited. If we are very sharp on the point, it will help us

[Translation]

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI (Maharajganj) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will try to express here whatever I have felt in society on the basis of my feelings

MR. SPEAKER : No, you may take as much time as you like.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI : I have neither to praise the Government unduly nor to speak for or against any.

MR. SPEAKER : You may take as much time you like.

[English]

I am saying that if we do that way, it will be more helpful. There is no time constraint.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI : This issue has been pending for two years and atrocities on women are continuing. Gradually a time has come when Parliament took it up to have a debate on atrocities being committed on women.

Atrocities are of many kinds at family level, society level, at mental level and physical, religious, economic level etc.

In the census of Twentieth Century Women population was 990 against one thousand males, which

has now further decreased to 910 with the development of scientific techniques. Atrocities start even before taking birth and it has assumed an explosive proportions.

The figures of the cases of rape, dowry death, molestation, abduction of girls, compelling girls to carry on illegal occupations etc. given here are not complete. We never got any survey conducted so far. We do not have placewise and category wise figures of atrocities committed women. No doubt great women like Gargi and Maitreyi were born here and empowerment of women started here.

In our sub-continent, Shrimati Bhandarnaike in ceylon, Shrimati Indira Gandhi in India, Shrimati Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and Shrimati Jiya in Bangala Desh took birth, Chinese in Burma are in prison. Despite so much energy and power in women what is their position and condition? Our daughters are being insulted openly and daily They have to weep and they are insecure in their houses and outside If you go to police, you will see an employee of home department rapes his own daughter in a hotel starting a blue film while raping her. Under the procedure of justice where shall one get justice? Whatever rules you have framed or laws changed or strengthened, can a girl of eight years, who has been raped, go and get justice, because there are loopholes available in Indian Penal Code for escape from all such cases A case of rape after every 54 minutes, molestation after 26 minutes, kidnapping after every 43 minutes, eve-teasing after 51 minutes, dowry death after 42 minutes, act of cruelty after every 33 minutes is taking place in our country. From occurrence of incidents such, it appears clear that one criminal act against women is being committed after every seven minutes. This position is inspite of several laws made or changed on being introduced. The figures quoted above are from Government record, which are less than 50% of the actual figures

We made efforts in this connection again and again at Government level as well as non Government level by associating voluntary organisations and groups of Women workers. In the Actions taken by Government include setting up of a Women crime Branch. Its condition is that one officer of what branch had an ill eye on a women employee of that branch When women went to Saharanpur in connection with the case of Usha Dhiman, the condition of those employees was that a women had raised fund to bribe police. Home department is meant for protecting us, but its nude pictures shows that he has thrown away its sense of shame with a view to a shame that woman and act shamelessly. We have to save ourselves, whether it is a case of Usha Dhiman of Uttar Pradesh in which a girl was killed under suspicion of her desire to marry her cousin brother, or it is a case of Haryana in which a woman of Meena caste was raped by the son of the village Panch and a threat was given that if any one

from her house came forward to give evidence, he/she will also meet the same fate. Due to fear psychosis one came forward to depose evidence. In Punjab working girls/ladies were tatoored on the forehead as being pick-pocket. Has any man ever been treated like that? We have such a tradition here. My predecessor stated "Yatra Naryastu Poojyante, Ramante Tatra Devta." We give women the place of goddess and SumitrajI just spoke in praise of Goddess Durga. When I read hymns in praise of Durga, I see her in bad shape. The demons who were incited to face her included a Demon named Dhumralochan who was a creation of Lord Vishnu and who had caught hold of her hair from forehead and asked her to accompany him and marry his master. Then she told him that he was powerless. Today time has come to infuse strength in women to enable them to rise and save themselves from acts of oppression and suppression. Government has made several changes in the penal code and anti dowry provisions have also been given teeth and their evidence strengthened. How they shall avange their death after they die? One who has dies or the one who has become 'Sati' cannot enjoy mundane pleasures.

There is a talk of empowerment of women, on the other hand you give only Rs. 25 on a deposit of Rs. 75 how that will empower them. How many women have been thus empowered by opening of a fund? Your participation of only 33% therein exposes you. In the Cabinet there are only 20% ladies and only one of Cabinet rank, only four State Ministers and one Deputy Minister. Condition of protection is that there are two lady Ministers in the Ministry of Human Resources A Anganwari lady worker working under one of them was raped, who ultimately committed suicide. As per another news published on 1st December, 1992, Principal of Navodaya Vidyalaya-which comes under her charge raped a girl student of his school. There have been 48 rape cases in Navodaya Vidyalayas Teachers of the school are also involved in the cases ..(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : What can be done to stop it?

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI : I am taking very less time No other Speaker took this much little time.

MR. SPEAKER : We would like to know as to what can be done to curb such happenings.

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI :There are measure for it. We should give teeth to those laws ...(Interruptions) I will speak if you allow me two minutes time.

MR. SPEAKER : You take 10 or 15 minutes but let us know that measures an be taken.

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI : Prior to it an official of Home Ministry had raped his daughter and when that incident was raised...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please do not repeat it again and again. It has been said and it is not necessary to repeat it.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI : A Government assurance was given to the effect that if a statutory change is required that would also be resorted to the teeth of your laws. Besides framing a law, convene in all party meeting where in each Member of Parliament may take on oath that if any of their kith or kin got involved in a rape case, they will spearhead the mobe seeking their execution, and will not join their saviours. Similarly, incidences of dowry death also occur to often. If we are found giving or taking dowry, our members present here to pledge that they would eschew dowry I am ready for it. This is how dowry practice can be eradicated within a minute and it will not take any more toll. Dowry death are taking place in Delhi just beneath your very nose but we are not equiped with any social or legal means to stop it. Therefore besides empowering us legally, the people's representatives here should feel it their responsibility to take anti dowry pledge. Hon'ble speaker, Sir, you are our Ombudsman, leader and master. You call each of them and ask them to make a pledge to eschew dowry. Similarly in the prevailing trend of treating girl child with difference, it is not men alone, but women as well indulge in perpetrating atrocities on girls.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I am trying to make them understand this, but they are not comingforth.

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI : Please give us your suggestions on how to prevent such atrocities on women. I would like to have the suggestions from you. I would like to entire House to give me the suggestions. I welcome the suggestions; I welcome the critics' suggestions. Please give me the suggestions on how can we reduce these things.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI : I have suggested to call those brutal persons and punish them. Because you did not do that, so I had to say this. I repeat that because I am distressed over torture of that lady worker. As regards unequal status of girls, a Bill has been introduced in Rajya Sabha. Why did we not pass the Bill? Veenaji once suggested for vesting or equal rights and told that when we go to our in-laws' house, we have to wait for distribution of property of his parents so that we may be entitled to our share in that property. Why do we not get our right at the time of our marriage? In the house of husband also, a wife gets her share only after partition or property. If we have to think for empowerment of women. First of all we shall have to amend our property laws. A bill was brought forward in

regard to Parasis, which was passed by us all happily, in which girls was to be paid 50% share.

With all these things said and the condition prevailing all around, I feel it is futile to lament within wilderness on all these things. I, therefore, while thanking you for giving me time to speak on this issue express my heart felt concern for all those hapless girls living a wrecked life and conclude.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS (Udaipur) : I thank the chair for affording me time to speak despite my late coming.

I agree with the sentiments expressed by my predecessor and Speakers I genuinely feel that poet Sahlr's feelings cannot be irrelevant where he says

"Madad Mangti hai ye Radha ki Beti.
Yashoda ki humjan, jubeda ki beti."

I cannot forget an old Egyptian story of Afigniya—once there was drought and priests declared that drought cannot be removed unless the most beautiful girl is sacrificed. The girl and her mother opposed it in the first instance. But in the man-dominated society, who cares for the woman? I want to carry the House with me to that scenario when she was being taken to the altar of sacrifice and the priests were chanting religious incantations and saying that Afigniya fortunate and temples and churches would be constructed in her name because she was sacrificing her life for the sake of her religion and the country and that if she had any last desire, she could express that. Afigniya, in the first instance, refuse to express her last wish, but on reaching the altar she suddenly turned back and said that the females of the coming generation should not be treated as chattel, they should rather be treated as human being. Saying so Afigniya died.

Even today all women of the world shall unanimously and unequivocally would say that they should be treated as human beings and not as commodities. We cannot therefore forgive those persons who committed atrocities on women in the name of religion or politics or on any other pretext. Rama may be worshipped inspite of doing injustice to Sita, I cannot deny it, I do not want to give the example of Ahilya, but it has to be quoted that me person disguised as her husband raped her, but her husband cursed her to become a stone and then she waited for lord Rama is going to come for her protection and safeguard.

I want to submit to the hon. Minister that we shall have to translate the dreams of our freedom fighters in reality. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the 'Harijan' in 1920 that independence and freedom are meaningless until and unless all persons standing in a line get equal rights. But the law makers gave that right to women, although we were nowhere in the line, and we got those political rights which are not available to women else where in the world. We should, therefore, take independence as a bliss and feel grateful to these

freedom fighters and law makers. Thereafter the scenario changed and efforts were made to change the whole scenario through Five Year Plans. We are thankful to you for this.

Though the first three-four plans were women-oriented very few chances were provided for women and only 102 women were nominated. It need not mentioned that what type of women they were. From that it can be construed how welfare oriented schemes had been formulated. That is why the perspective of 4th, 5th and 6th Plans were changed and these were made development-oriented. You made those plans development oriented and for that I congratulate you. Many programmes of women welfare were included in them. But in the 7th and 8th Plan you advanced one step forward and the Government looked after women upliftment and awakening of women. All the programmes were formulated because of awareness among women. For that I congratulate womanfolk.

I cannot forget Rajiv ji in this context Indiraji provided strength to the women. She came forward as power embodied. I will not be hyperbolic if I say that Rajeevji had more compassion and piety for women. He tried to translate Gandhiji's idea into reality that persons standing in one line should be best owed with equal social, political, economic rights so that the independence that we have achieved may prove meaningful. That is why he brought forward Panchayat and municipal council Bill as model for the world to emulate it. He wanted to provide rights to women on reservation basis but unfortunately the Bill could not be passed during his time. I express my gratitude to the Prime Minister and both the Houses of Parliament for passing that noble Bill. Thereafter male mentality found some change. Had there been a feminine outlook, the Bill could not have been passed by both the Houses of Parliament.

I thank you also Mr Speaker for taking initiative in this noble task of providing us political rights. We shall find our country is much ahead such countries as have bestowed of not even 5 to 6 percent of political rights to women. Here we have 33 percent participation at the lower level. The Prime Minister has materialised Shri Rajiv Gandhi's dream of giving economic rights to women by taking a small step in the form of Women's Prosperity Scheme. Now it is our responsibility to complete that task. We may criticise the Government to any extent, but I would like to submit to you that had the Government not been aware of it then the perspective plan upto 2000 could not be prepared, which we have already formulated. How the idea of providing women with social economic, political and legal rights would have surfaced in them.

I agree with Smt. Girija ji's assertion that the figures are really disturbing and distressing. Ratio of figures has been increasing by 10-12 percent. There is no end

to other types of atrocities on women. Intention of our Government is not bad. I think if she happens to see the condition of those women who are confined in short stay homes or Mahila Welfare Villages, she will shed tears. Today goonda element go there and commit adultery with ladies in Welfare Villages. They are safe in homes but unsafe in Police Station. We shall have to think in this regard in a different way.

As far women's status in present days none can deny there are two attributes to it—first, the social set up in which women might have ever taken a initiative during certain period of history. In this regard Jaan Paul Satre had stated

"You are condemned to be free."

We may be obsessed to be free, but we shall have to recall the atrocities which women had to bear and make sincere efforts to curb them. Earlier whatever decision used to be taken by the head of family, was implemented, but now the circumstances are very serious. Tulsidasji had rightly put down that "Nari Na Mohey Nari ke Roopa."

Though we may raise our loud voice against the atrocities that are being perpetrated on women, while sitting like an armed chair philosopher, but it cannot be denied that today women are themselves, perpetrating atrocities on women. In such a situation, what will the law do? We have enacted laws. I, therefore, urge upon woman members of Parliament to rise above five star culture and go to villages and ask the women about their plight and share their sorrow and pleasures. Now the ball is in our court. Despite so many political, social and economic rights given to us, the tragedy is that these are not being implemented. We shall have to do self-introspection and find a simple reply. Seminars are held on Government money in five star hotels, but its recommendations are not implemented at grassroot level. I urge upon the hon. Minister to have stringent laws and if necessary, these can be amended from time to time. For example, the issue of share in property had come up before the House that women should get right to the property of her husband.

Suppose it is done then what will be the form of social structure? In Maharashtra 33% jobs have been reserved for women. I congratulate the State Government for that. But the society has not accepted the position which has emerged from behind the scene. Therefore, first of all, we shall have to create awareness. A brother came to me and said if 33% reservation in jobs for women is given, his unmarried sister will get a job but what will be his position after she is married. On the other hand the husband says that he will remain unemployed. Unless social changes are brought about law cannot be implemented successfully. Therefore, we all should follow what Rajivji had said about the drafting and shaping of our five year plans

where in we may make concerted efforts to achieve that objective.

It cannot be denied that this Ministry has set up a women's commission. A few days back, there was a discussion on Women's Commission. It is ridiculous that an hon. Member raised the issue of rape of a man and thus ridiculed the issue. The fact is that the cases referred by the Commission are not attended to by any of the concerned Ministries. Through you I would like to ask the minister to think in this regard. It is not sufficient on the part of a ministry to say that things have been pending in other ministries. That won't help in redressal of our complaints. There is a need to give teeth and nails to the commission to confer executive power to it.

As you have said that we should come up with suggestions, I agree with you. We shall have to make the provisions of I.P.C. and Cr. P.C. a bit more stringent. Unless special courts are set up, pending cases relating to atrocities on women would remain unsettled. In addition, there is necessity of police stations exclusively in every state. For this purpose a police station for a population of 1 or 2 lakhs women can be set up. In Rajasthan, mobile vans have been put into service. Maximum number of cases are being reported from Jaipur. Telephone facility is available to them. Whenever dowry death cases were reported mobile van reached the site within fifteen minutes. Arrangements should be made for providing mobile vans in big cities in the co-operation of the Home Ministry. Every state not having a Woman Commission. It should be ensured that women commission are invariably set up in all the remaining states within three months. As far the education system, both Job oriented education and Awareness education should form part of women education. In many states free technical education is being imparted to girls where as many other states have not made any such arrangement. The Education Minister should direct them to impart free education and technical education to women. Jobs for women should be divided into three categories i.e. for widows, for divorcees and general category. We made an experiment in Rajasthan after eradication of practice of Sati, keeping widows and age barred women outside those jobs. It fetched good results and created a social awareness among them and the widows got jobs. Similarly, we should provide jobs to divorced ladies and direct the state Governments accordingly. Financial aid is provided to women through WDP, NAFED or Dwakra, but there is no proper co-ordination among them. I had written a letter to you requesting for entrusting the programme of total literacy to Anganwari workers, Dwakra workers and WDP women workers. If the Government cannot enhance their pay scales, it can at least entrust them with the responsibility of literacy programme by paying some amount as honorarium. In this way these women will run both the programme, one before noon and the other in the evening. For this,

they should at least get one thousand rupee each. This experiment was implemented in Rajasthan and it fetched good results. I want to say that on the one hand, we have given 33% political rights to women, but on the other hand, in Copenhagen, a film on child marriage is shown daily.

Thereafter having delivered speeches that we have delegated all Social-political rights to them. We felt ashamed to see on TV children of 4-5 years age getting married. Here too, alongwith stringent laws awareness is absolutely essential. When I was Minister incharge of this Department, in Rajasthan, the Home Ministry could act only in two cases, but the workers of women Development Project successfully stopped 200 child marriages. It is regretting that same WDP is being discontinued by Rajasthan State Government. In this regard, I request your intervention and to exert your influence to persuade the State Government to continue WDP, not only in that state but also in other States. The main problem is increasing population. We can not afford to overlook the menace. Despite several laws framed by the Government, there is lack of awareness among the people. You should not sit complacent with the figures supplied by the collectorate but should go to the bottom to see the reality, You should organise most of the camps through WDP, Dwakra or Anganwari Workers and Members of Parliament State legislatures and other statutory bodies should be associated with those programmes. In my area, the MLPs or MIAs are not invited to participate in these programmes. We must be invited so that we could contribute constructively.

There is no doubt that atrocities on women are on the increase but besides that awareness has also increased simultaneously, be it the case of dowry deaths, rapes or legal separation, today, women themselves are coming forward to struggle for their rights. For effectively implementing the organising programmes for imparting education and job-oriented courses. With this, I am sure, the day is not far when we will be able to make the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi come true.

In regard to jails, I am to say that 80% to 90% women are implicated without sufficient reasons or they get themselves emotionally involved in such cases. Men get themselves bailed out anyhow. Sir, I am conducting my research work there. I would like to tell you that when women confined in jail, under section 302 and 307 get released, nobody comes to see them, not even their husbands, sons, in such a condition we should run some programmes in jails so that they become self-sufficient before their release. They also form a part of our society. If we confine them forever, they will never be able to get out of it.

The Government is determined to give them full rights so that they are able to live with their full

individuality. Now the women have themselves become aware and they have got elected to Panchayats, Municipal Councils etc. with some an idea to materialise their dreams. Even uneducated and semi-educated women have started reading and writing. They have given a slogan 'Alongwith home and hearth, we shall become Pradhan also'. There is perceptible change in mental outlook of men and women. Male MPs deserve congratulations for passing this Bill and releasing that in 21st century they cannot keep women in the condition in which Seeta, Panchali, Ahilya lived in old days. However, women are now aware that since they can neither go with women liberation, nor want to be treated with utter contempt. They will have to follow mid-path so that they could enjoy social, political, economic rights alongwith discharging their household responsibilities. Before, concluding, I would like to quote following conplet :

"Abhi Tewar Kahan Badle Hai Inke, Abhi apna Daur
Hai Inqalabi Ka, Abhi Bhi Sehra 'Hai, Tapish Baki
Hai, Abhi Mausam Kahan Gulabi Ka."

They will still have to create further awakening that they, as women are one society. With this concept gaining ground, stringent laws and their proper implementation together with unity of women will take them further and remove all bottlenecks coming in the way of their progress. I thank you, Sir, for allowing me time to speak.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE . Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will, as advised by you, try to suggest a few things. But perhaps I cannot begin without thanking you

SHRI P.M. SAYEED : Are you thanking me?

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJE Do you want my thanks?

I thank the Chair because there were so many subjects which could have been picked up and I believe the most important on has been picked up I would like to thank Geetaji also. Let me give you a story. We came to the political movement almost together. We are of the same age group. We were having our matriculation. One of the first and almost electrifying actions in Calcutta at that time was when she was a student when one male member tried to heckle her at a busy junction. She was the first person, as far as I could remember, who used her shoes to beat him up on the street.

Of course, I must also thank all the other women activists here particularly because unless women activists are able to rise against what is in a denigrating sense characterised as the second sex, we ourselves feel debased. Therefore, my thanks go to all those who not only participated in the discussions here, but to all those who are activists in preventing atrocities on

women. That is just the tip of the ice berg. The basic question is the question of inequality as between the so called first and the second sex. I will come to that

I feel tempted to make another mention. I had a hand in it to this extent. There is one factor which we nurtured from our student days. Our approach was a very rigorous, no-nonsense, scientific approach of scientifically viewing the affairs of the society. In fact, it is that which led some of us to Marxism. We knew there were other fields. The heart is there, but the heart must guide the head also.

19.00 hrs.

But wherever it is a problem of the head, the approach has to scientific as rigorously as possible

With that approach, let me mention another fact in which I have no hand but like to take pride. I was born as was usual in our cases at that time-in my maternal uncle's house, my mother's parent's house. The house where I was born-that house in Calcutta-was the house where Shri Ishwar Chandra Vidyasaagar's first widow remarriage took place. It was in that house that I was born. So, those things come to my mind when I speak on this question.

Before I come to the constructive suggestions, let me try to eliminate some of the fallacies, some of the misconceptions are still prevalent. Now, for instance, let us not demean ourselves too much. Let us remind ourselves that centuries had to pass before franchise to women could be granted in what is considered to be the most democratic country in the world, the United Kingdom. They got franchise for the elite first, then for the adult male; and only in the first quarter of this century could the adult women also get their franchise. Let us take pride in this that we had that as soon as we got independence. Why should we demean ourselves? She has made a reference and very correctly so that it is a very strange phenomenon in the Asian context. We have the most number of women premiers, women leaders in the political field. She has mentioned Pakistan; she has mentioned Sri Lanka. We are, of course, there and Bangladesh is also there. In Myanmar also, it would have been possible had that lady not been arrested. In Philippines also, there was a women President.

In the past of this subcontinent also, we were, that is our women were exceptional in the field of science, in the field of arts and in any other field. In the ancient ages, we had exceptional women. But at the same time let us remind ourselves that these were exceptions. We had exceptional women, but these were exceptions. Why is it so? And here, let us try to understand that there are some fallacies in our understanding of certain things.

There was a stage in our society when it was the women it was the women who dominated. We know

that is known in history as matriarchal period. They were absolutely dominant during that period. Then certain things changed. Some of its remnants are still there in the tribal regions of Himachal Pradesh and in some areas in Kerala. But then, the economic activity of the womankind changed and a new kind of economic relations began to develop. I will not go very long into the past, but at least into two modes of the past in the economy. In the feudal mode and in the capitalist modes, women's enslavement—not only impairment, but far from it, enslavement—began to occur. Look at our kings. We had princesses also. But rest of them had a big harem of so many wives.

They had so many wives. All this was prevalent in the feudal days. Women were treated like any other property in the household. The capitalists obviously were a cleverer lot. On surface, they will show praises which are more than due, in order to cover up to equality and they will be extra courteous to women. But as we all know in this period of society where profit is the dominating motive, everything is translated into whether or not that production is saleable and everything becomes a commodity. It was pointed out here What is dowry? Even the love between the husband and the wife was looked at in terms of cash. Even the relationship between the children and the parents in this phase of society was looked at in terms of funds. Should parents remain in the family? Are they too burdensome or are they useful for our children? After considering this, the family may retain them. So, new dimensions were entered into and new ways of enslaving women took place against which the so-called second sex began to battle. They got the franchise. It is in this context that it was pointed out that unless in the field of economy itself certain changes are made, the basic requirement that equity among the sexes cannot be fulfilled. It is not my point to say that with basic changes in the economy or social structure, equality would be automatic; that is not so. Extra additional efforts have to be made to get ride of so many thousands of years of ideas and practices of inequality.

But the important point remains that while the house not merely a base, there is a structure above that. All the same, the superstructure cannot exist without the base. So, we have to handle that; we have to lay the base before we construct. It is here that important questions arise and it is here that certain solutions have to be found out.

To the extent I have been able to understand and appreciate comrade Suseela Gopalan's statement, she made a reference—I think, Shrimati Geetaji also made it, I do not remember—that in the countryside the basic problem of inequality arises because of ownership of land. It is there that we have to handle—as you say, cutting across party lines but not cutting across politics—together the problem. Even then, that is not enough. It

is sometimes suggested—as our honourable and sympathetic Minister was suggesting, the suggestion about *anganwadi* was very good—that are we not employing women or are we not giving work to women through the *anganwadi* Well, there is a fallacy in that statement. It is not true that the women are without work. In fact, it is the opposite and they are over-worked. In the families and in the fields, they are over-worked than men. Males can relax in the evening, but they cannot even relax. So, it is not a question of unemployment in the sense of occupation, but what we are trying to do is certainly good. All this is unrecognised in terms of current value of income. All this is considered to be unpaid labour and since they are unpaid, they are not valued. Therefore, whenever we raise the question of payment to *anganwadi* workers, that question arises.

We have to understand it that way. They are unpaid. They are not without work. Now, if you pay them Rs.100, you say that you have started paying. But Rs.100 will not get them equality. It is from that context that the question arises again and again. If you want to introduce equality among women, this under-payment has to stop. She has made a suggestion and I full appreciate that suggestion. They try to increase it and give them that kind of a job which can be justified in terms of economic strength of the country also. But that is one very positive suggestion.

Sir, there was various levels of solution of these problems—short term and long term ones. I know that during pre-Independence days and perhaps even now, when you talk only of atrocities, we offered very simple solutions. In our own families, we asked our girls—may be sisters or whoever she may be—to take to *Ju-jitsu* training. During the freedom movement, we had jobs to train women in lathi wielding and handling knives. That is one level of approach. If women can take charge of their own physical safety in physical terms, that is one level but that cannot be done everywhere. But, all the same we did try to approach at the micro level also that whatever can be had, let it be had. There is no objection to that. But there is no solution.

The second thing that has to be done is this. I do recongise—let it be very candid—that it is not a party matter. The fact of reservation in panchayats and local self-government is of tremendous significance for the country. There is no escaping the fact. We were in trouble, frankly speaking. We have to find out where from we get 30 per cent and who are people because in the normal day-to-day living, we have not succeeded even if we wish to generate such enthusiasm among the so-called *second sex* so that there are enough activists to occupy these positions. The very fact of reservation, the fact that we are all forced to do it is changing the contours of society. This is a path in right direction. Mind you, they are 50 percent. Even if the fraction is a little less, we are still saying it as 30 per cent. The condition of equality, quite often, is in equal rights. If

we want to achieve equality, then we have to provide unequal conveniences to those who are suffering. This is true between one country and another also. This is what I mean when we say that we want to protect their rights. This is not free competition in terms of equal base. The same thing applies here also. That is why, there is reservation which is an unequal situation. But without that inequality, you cannot arrive at the equality that we desire. Now, Sir, if this is accepted, let us try to reason out this. Should we not take further steps along these directions? We have also provided unequal relationship in terms of 50 per cent reservation like the OBC reservation and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes reservation. Why cannot we say that there must be 50 per cent reservation not only in the field of panchayat system but also in others areas such as civil services examinations, etc.? This will not violate constitutional rights because within that, we can have it exactly as we are having it in the panchayat system. Why cannot we say that must be 50 per cent reservation if they are appearing in civil service examinations? Some people may raise the question of quality. Initially, there will be sufferings as there were utterances in the case of even Scheduled Castes reservation.

But in every sphere of life where income generation takes place, where property accumulation through income generation is possible, if we try to introduce these kinds of provisions, only that will lay the basis ultimately against these atrocities. That is not enough, but ultimately that would lay the basis.

Rest of it is going on it is. I believe, this discussion is not the conclusion of what Shrimati Geetaji has initiated but another beginning for another spot ahead. And always, as it has been said again and again, nobody can liberate somebody else. Liberation has to come from the person who wants to be liberated. This applies to even folk also, so called 'second sex' also. They have to organise themselves much more than it is today. What we can do is not to feel, not to say that they are doing it for themselves but to believe they are doing it for us and therefore for the entire society. It is due to this movement among the women organisations, striking power and empowerment the United Nations Conference is going to take place in Beijing in another few months' time. Empowerment is becoming the central theme. Empowerment means, 1) give them power in the field of economy, give them power even it appears to be unequal, give them more power; and 2) allow them to organise, provide for all instruments which help them to organise and strike hard at the mind of the people who have inherited the bias in a very unreasonable manner. It is there that the laws become important.

But much more, as has been pointed out, than laws would be the struggle of the women led by activists who are all MPs here across the party lines for the sake of sake

MR. SPEAKER : Very good.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA (Ferozabad) : think you for giving me time to speak, and Geetaji also for raising such an important issue.

Even so many years after independence of India, woman is still called 'Abala' (A weaker sex). The way in which woman are being raped and subjected to various kind of brutalities is certainly condemnable. I belong to Brijbhumi in Uttar Pradesh. There has been an incident of rape of scheduled castes women in a planned way in a brick kiln of Parsi in Aligarh district. Such an ignoble act was done by people who are socially influential and maintain political circle. I visited the site of incident and heard them sitting among those 17 women whether they belonging to either political party or official team.....

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: We are not discussing the individual cases. We are discussing the problems and solutions.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA: It is not an individual case, Now I am telling what happened

MR. SPEAKER : I agree with your viewpoint

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : The way in which officers investigating into the matter interrogate a particular lady again and again that what happened thereafter and so on, she would certainly feel embarrassed and will not be able to open her mouth. Such behaviour has been meted out to women at many a places. I have got the opportunity to visit approximately ten places in Uttar Pradesh. Whether it is the case of Budaun or Allahabad or a case of rape of 7 years old girl, the victims belonged to down trodden communities. However neither U.P. Government nor Central Government has arrested the accused so far and they are roaming freely. The condition of woman in this country today is so pitiable that they are compelled to think what they should do. The patriots, at the time of independence, did not imagine of such pitiable condition of women and depressed classes in independent India.

Mahatma Gandhi had declared that India will not be considered an independent country until and unless the poor, depressed class, rural, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people in the country were uplifted.

Sir, I congratulate late Rajeev Gandhi who in his short tenure had understood well the circumstances prevailing in the country and had given serious thought to the welfare of these classes of people. I do not want to repeat the figures of crimes. In U.P. 14048, in M.P. 11378, in Rajasthan 13973 and in Andhra Pradesh 8300 cases were registered. In addition, there are many

women belonging to poor, scheduled castes & tribes and depressed classes whose F.I.R. have not been registered in police stations. A woman is a woman, whether she belongs to high or low caste or depressed or scheduled caste. A house, village, country, city or a place where women are insulted or ill-treated, is a hell for her. Who is responsible therefor and who will listen to their distress? In regard to atrocities on women and down-trodden communities, we shall have to rise above party politics. Otherwise, no useful purpose will be served merely by making laws. Laws are already there, but FIR of many women are not registered even today.

I had an opportunity to see a case in Itawa. However, I should not like to quote the names. Hands and legs of the father of a seven year old girl were tied in her presence and he was made to hang from a Neem tree. Thereafter, the girl was raped at 10 o'clock in the night. Two ministers of our government went to Lucknow. There, the correspondents of newspapers wanted to know from them about the action on the incidents of Itawa, Muzaffarnagar and Parsi. A woman, whether she belongs to any caste is ultimately a woman. The Minister, while replying to queries of the correspondents, said, "a proper decision will be taken at an appropriate time." What does it mean? Such persons are unfit for the positions they are holding. Had Krishna uttered such words when modesty of Draupadi was being outraged in the very court of the Kurus, could Draupadi's honour be saved? Such decisions on the part of the minister will be not at all justified.

MR. SPEAKER : Here, everybody knows about it.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Such a disease spreading in the society cannot be cured by merely passing a law. Today politics has been criminalised and a criminal has not caste or religion. If criminals are at the seat of power, how can poor people, women, scheduled castes and down-trodden sections get justice?

First of all, we should make stringent laws in this Parliament, the greatest Panchayat of the country. If after investigation into the matter, by the CBI or a judicial authority it is found that a person of a political party is involved in such a crime, his membership should be revoked by amending the People's Representation Act suitably. If that person does not admit his guilt, his membership from the political party should also be revoked. Only such stringent actions can help in stopping such crimes against women and improve their condition.

I feel distressed to find that there is not a single department in country, be it Panchayat, legislature, judiciary, executive or other statutory bodies which is free from corruption. Anybody and everybody today says openly that white collared and khadi clad are involved in corruption. Our head shall remain down with shame unless this corruption is rooted out until then situation in the country cannot improve. Today an FIR is lodged

in a police station, it is got cancelled at the instance of an influential person. If a person intends to go to a court...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, please help us. This is not on the point. We are going tangent.

[Translation]

There are many such problems but today we are going to discuss only one problem.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : I am saying something about corruption. Action against small criminals are not going to affect the society unless the criminalisation of politics is stopped.

MR. SPEAKER : It is alright. You have raised a good point. Now come to the next point.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : I would like to say that mere suspension of incharge of a police station will not suffice. There is no use of arresting petty thieves unless effective law is enacted to take stringent action against the guilty persons in the ruling party.

MR. SPEAKER : Please come to the point. Otherwise I will not allow.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : I am coming to the point. I would like to say that nothing can be done without enacting an effective law to check corruption. Please give me a little more time.

MR. SPEAKER : What is this? you are going on speaking.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : It is a fact. Public will humiliate us on roads if we do not mend ourselves. We should be aware of our responsibilities and duties. A Member of Parliament is elected by approximately 20 lakh persons.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : We will discuss the issue of corruption on some other day. Now we are discussing atrocities on women.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : How can we reform others without reforming ourselves.

MR. SPEAKER : It is a good point.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : First, we have to reform ourselves. An effective law should be enacted to stop criminalisation of politics.

MR. SPEAKER : You have raised good points. Now give time to other Members to speak. I have not stopped anybody if he has tried to speak on a point.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Today, we see Western people flooding our country. Daily such serials

are telecast on T.V. which depict nudity. While viewing such programmes our heads hang in shame. I am not in agreement with one thing said by Smt. Girija. If we look at the history, the Indian woman has throughout been respected and honoured. We always chant 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and not 'Bharat Pita Ki Jai'. Similarly we enchant Radha Krishna and Sita Ram respectively and not Ram-Sita or Krishan-Radha because women are hailed first and the man later. It is our Indian culture and civilization which have always honoured women. The situation prevailing in the country today is the result of selfishness and indecisiveness on the part of the people in power. If we are not able to do justice to our people, they will not forgive us. Is the Government so weak that it is unable to stop nudity or semi-nudity being exhibited by westerners coming into India? We have respect for foreigners. Our country hold women in high esteem whereas, the status of women abroad is different.

Man and woman are two wheels of the Charlot of life and both are complementary to each other. Any attempt to create a wedge between the two will generate animosity. As a charlot cannot run with one wheel, similarly man and woman will have to give regards to one another and live together.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, secondly, women should be an ideal of affection. However, where this affection will come from? Feeding powder-milk to children cannot generate affection. In our history, a mother has inspired her son to go to battle field to defend his nation, in the name of the milk fed to him by her. But today instead of breast feeding, milk powder is fed to children and that too by Ayahs. Breast feeding by mothers can create a feeling of love for the society and nation.

Sir, my next point is that today our food system is not in accordance with our culture. 'Tamasaic' food will not generate humane feelings. Nowadays one observes how our leaders make false promises but do nothing. Therefore, we should understand our responsibilities. Unless we leave 'Tamasic' food, there cannot be welfare of the nation. When we shall eat meat, chicken or fish, what will be the difference between we and animals? Unless such harmful food is forsaken and there is proper regulation over diet and food, proper feelings towards human beings cannot be developed. We shall have to recognise the dignity of man and women.

Sir, laws should be made sufficiently forceful and implemented properly. It should not remain on paper alone. It should be given due publicity through electronic and press media. Wide publicity should be given to the punishments awarded for the crimes and cases of atrocities against women. It will send a message to the people in villages and cities that Government take such offences seriously and give severe punishments. Once it has its affect, people will keep themselves away from such acts.

Sir, laws remain only on paper. Who is guilty therefore? I don't want to go into party politics. I congratulate Indiraji. What concerns me is that what percentage of women living in rural areas have been imparted education? Right to education is the fundamental right of every citizen. Has the 65% population living in villages got proper education even after 47 years of independence.

MR. SPEAKER : You have to conclude now.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am concluding. This country with its 65% population living in rural areas cannot progress without proper education. The condition of women will not improve without the participation of peasants and labourers. Today's bureaucrats can't build such a nation as our freedom fighters had dreamt. Therefore, education is necessary among poor womenfolk.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, if you will not conclude, I will not allow it to go on record.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Education brings awakening in society. A woman will be subjected to humiliation in any society unless basic right of education is given to her. Man and woman are supplementary and complementary to each other. Welfare of women is not possible in the absence of a stringent law

"Binay na manat jaladhi jab gaye teen din beeti
bole Ram sakop tab bhaya bina hoye na priti"

Without a stringent law, such cruel, anti-social elements will continue to nourish ehimity.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak and conclude.

[English]

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN (Mukundapuram) Mr. Speaker Sir, as suggested by you, I will not narrate the problems faced by individual women. Everyone admits that women are facing problems and the sort of problems faced by women are known to all. In general, the problems faced by women can be divided into three or four categories.

Firstly, women are denied opportunities in many fields.

Secondly, women are raped occasionally. According to the statistics given in this august House itself, there are 47 rape cases every minute, age no bar, ranging from two years to seventy years. And, thirdly, there are so many other types of molestations done through several fields, through advertisements, through posters, through mass media, through official media, and through films. I would not narrate it because it is known to everyone of us.

Lastly, there is the problem of lack of laws and proper implementation of the existing laws. To resolve this particular problem, I feel that the Ministry of Law and the Ministry of Home Affairs can do a lot. It is their duty to chalk out various activities to implement the existing laws and to formulate new laws if needed. For the rest of the problems, I think, making women conscious to their issues is needed at a vigorous level. I know that the Government of India is doing a lot to improve the pathetic conditions of women through its different departments like Education, Women and Child, Health and Family Welfare, Youth Affairs etc., and I appreciate it. I would not narrate them also because we as parliamentarians know each of them. But the problem is that these attempts done by our Government are not well-known to the common public of our nation. For this, my first plea is that all efforts should be made to improve the conditions of women by giving publicity through all possible ways. Each Ministry could formulate its own methods to publicise programmes for upliftment of women.

My second suggestion is, one-third reservation should be provided for women not only in panchayats, municipalities, zilla parishads, but also in Legislative Assemblies and both the Houses of Parliament also.

MR. SPEAKER : Good.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : There should be reservation in the selection of Ministers also.

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN : Even Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee should appreciate the tremendous improvement made after reservation in panchayats. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : My feeling is that she was on the verge of accepting it.

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN : Thank you, very much, Sir. I would not narrate this point also; this can be discussed later.

My third suggestion is that there should be reservation for women in all kinds of jobs. I will add something to what Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee said here in this august House a little while ago. By reservation for women, I do not mean that some percentage should go for women from out of the total percentage reserved. Let me narrate a little bit, Sir, to make this point clear. If some percentage of reservation is given for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people, 50 per cent of that reservation should go to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women. If some percentage of reservation is given for minorities or OBCs, please reserve 50 per cent from that pool exclusively for minority or OBC women. And if some percentage is given for candidates who come on merit, please reserve 50 per cent of that category for women who are selected on merit.

Thus, you fulfil the ambition of giving 50 per cent reservation to women. Otherwise, it may lead to Constitutional crisis also.

At this juncture, I have one more plea. To be more specific, please reserve a fixed percentage for widows from among this 50 per cent reservation for women. Without explaining anything regarding widows that point could easily be swallowed by everybody sitting in this august House. In every field, whether it is the question of allotment of houses or any such thing, I think some percentage should be allotted for women. In nutshell, if you feel that giving this type of reservation is very difficult at the first instance, you may please choose some such fields. You can choose teaching jobs, clerical jobs, etc.

As I mentioned earlier, you please implement 50 per cent reservation for women first in some select fields. Then, gradually, you may please give reservation to women in every field in which we are dealing with. If you give opportunities to women in jobs, then only their status could be raised and atrocities on them could be controlled.

I would request all the political parties, through you, Sir, not to politicise things when the problems of women come up. I do remember a number of events but I am not quoting any such events now. When there is a decision to remove the uterus of mentally retarded girls or women perfectly on hygienic reasons, please do not run to some human rights organisation for petty political interests. When occasions like that come in front of us, please be united for the sake of humanity.

Lastly, I express my happiness that 50 per cent of the Members of Parliament present here at this late hour are women even though women hardly constitute only 10 per cent of the total number of Parliamentarians.

[Translation]

DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR (Hapur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Smt. Geeta Mukherjee deserves congratulations for raising this important discussion here. I hope some sound policy and concrete strategy will be evolved by this House to put an end to atrocities on women. The Members rising above party politics has taken note of the seriousness of the problem and need to stop such incidents. The number of incidents of atrocities on women have more than doubled during the last one decade and on an average one crime is committed against a woman every 6 minutes. A woman is raped after every 47 minutes while a woman is abducted after every 44 minutes. Thus, every third woman is being victimised by her husband or other relatives. As regards dowry cases, seventy women are daily pushed to the hutches of death. Last year, 82818 women were subjected to one or the other kind of crime. Rape cases have registered 100% increase during the past 20 years. Moreover, there has been 30% increase in the cases of abduction and elopement through allurement during that period.

Majority of cases of brutal acts on women have been reported in villages where rate of literacy among women is very low and they are not aware of their rights. Many women do not get the cases of atrocities on them registered due to the fear of infamy. We shall have to promote literacy among woman. Financial problem is another cause of atrocities on women. Many gangs are active in tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh where they compel advasi girls to resort to prostitution. We should raise their economic level to stop such atrocities on them.

Government have, no doubt, started several schemes aimed at ameliorating the conditions of women. There is talk of "Mahila Samridhi Yojana". I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any survey has been conducted to find out the extent of benefit derived by rural women through these schemes. It should also be assessed that what percentage of rural women take part in such schemes and programmes. How can rural women participate in 'Mahila Samridhi Yojana' when they are unable to get even food for subsistence. The Government should start such schemes in which majority of rural women can participate and thereby their economic status could be raised.

It is a matter of shame that where the ruling party people are involved in atrocities on women, The matter becomes more serious there. In Uttar Pradesh, there is a S.P., B.S.P. coalition government ruling over the state for the last 1½ years. Frankly speaking, there is no district in that in that state which is free from atrocities on women. The minister MLAs and leaders of S.P and B.S.P. are guilty for such crimes. You shall have to take action against ruling party persons, if atrocities on women are to be stopped. I can quote a number of incidents. In Muzafarnagar, women coming from Uttarakhand were subjected to atrocities. In my Ghaziabad constituency, a women named Prakashwati was abducted. In another incident five women labourers were raped. People belonging to the ruling party were involved in all these incidents. That is the reason the state Administrative machinery did not take any action against the guilty. We should, therefore, ensure that suitable action is invariably taken against such guilty persons without fail.

When women participate in Government, even then, atrocities on them are committed. In Khagaria Assembly constituency in Bihar, election of Smt. Chandramukhi as M.L.A. resulted in atrocities on her family members. Passage of Panchayati Raj Act, providing, 30% reservation for women in Panchayats, is a good step. But in U.P...*(Interruptions)*

The family members of the lady M.L.A. Smt. Chandramukhi, were severely beaten, man-handled and humiliated. The Government is seized of this issue.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) : You should say only what is authentic.

DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR : It is not concerned with you, it has already come up in the House ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Tomar, we are not sitting in a court. We are not recording evidence and hence, cannot give judgement on it. Please raise a general point.

DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR : It is a welcome step to give 30 percent representation to women in Panchayati Raj Act. In U.P., women took part in Panchayati Raj elections but they were subjected to oppression. In the election to the President of district Panchayat in Lucknow, a woman called Tara Devi ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I will not allow you time for this

DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR : I will conclude my speech in a minute. Since this incident has taken place in my constituency, I will conclude by speaking on it

MR. SPEAKER : Alright. If it concerns your constituency, then you may speak.

DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR : A woman, named Tara Devi wanted to fill nomination papers for the election to the post of President, district Panchayat but a legislator of SP kidnapped her and did not let her fill the nomination papers. If women interestal to participate in power are subjected to such oppression, how can these women take part. A woman named Amlsh Chauhan was going to cast her vote in the election of District Council Panchayat President in my constituency. When she entered the room of the Presiding officer...*(Interruptions)* She was manhandled by another candidate who tore her clothes and did not let her cast her vote. The hon. Minister of Home Affairs should collect all the facts and inform the House accordingly. If we wish to put a check on the oppression against women, then we will have to create awareness in women society

Perpetration of atrocities on women is a social evil. This perpetration of atrocities against women can only be stopped by creating a social awareness. The woman will not have to struggle for it. In fact, the mentality of the whole society will have to be changed. Unless there is a change in the present social scenario, the atrocities on women will continue.

MR. SPEAKER : It has already been raised in a proper manner.

DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR : The pace of our judicial process is slow. We should make such a stringent legislation which can check perpetration of atrocities against women. This crime could be stopped only when the atrocities against women are viewed as a social crime and not as a personal issue. I demand that those women against whom atrocities are being perpetrated...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You do not have to make a demand. You should tell us what has to be done.

DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR : For women-related cases special courts should be set up. People found guilty of committing crimes against women should be severely dealt with and punished. I thank you for having allowed me time to speak.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : Sir, the word 'woman' has been parallel or equated to a drop of tear. It is poetically done. It was done in the ancient days but it is unfortunate that this poetic definition continues even now or it sticks even now.

I will only raise a few points with regard to atrocities which are taking place. One is, as mentioned by all the Members, crime against women; second is, the attitude of not treating women as equal to men; third is, social stigmas attached to women or to the fields in which they come up; fourth is, lack of economic and educational emancipation of women; fifth is, exploitation of women; sixth is, lack of legislations or plugging loopholes in legislations which are already there; seventh is, lack of will for implementation of the legislations or the provisions already made, and lastly, I would refer to the way in which women are kept out of power.

I am not going into the details but I will just refer to these points. Regarding crime against women, so many points have already been mentioned, especially with stress to the crime against Adivasies and the poor sections, that is the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. There is also another class to which this applies too much nowadays, that is, the hapless women who live together without protection from men, for example, the Nuns. They are being attacked in many areas and many of them are cruelly killed for several purposes which are known.

Regarding equality, I would like to mention that this is not an aspect where man alone can find a solution. I think, women are also rather shy enough or rather not absolutely ready to assert their equality.

Regarding the social stigmas attached, even not giving proof or evidence regarding crimes are affecting them too much. I can just say about the evidence taken in a court of law. No woman can give free evidence in a court of law or even if she can, she finds a lot of difficulties to withstand the way in which cross-examination is being done. It is also true that because of the social stigmas attached the women, they cannot go to a police station or police authorities to make a complaint or to substantiate their complaints.

Now, regarding economic and educational aspects, I think, a lot has to be done in this regard as is being done by the Government as well as by the State Governments. Now, something much has to be done in this regard.

Regarding the legislations, much has already been spoken about the new legislations which are necessary and the loopholes in the existing legislations. One loophole, which I would like to point out specifically, is regarding Section 10 of the Indian Marriage Act on divorce to a Christian woman. If a Christian woman wants to get a divorce, she has to prove against her husband adultery read with cruelty. That provision has been found to be wrong by the Court. Whereas, for a man, it is only adultery to be proved and he need not prove cruelty. Such a lot of difference which has been there in the legislation and which was in the law book for long and which has been pointed out to be wrong recently by the Supreme Court. I think, steps are to be taken for some kind of an amendment in this regard. Sir, I am not going into other legislations, which I thought I would make a mention, because of the paucity of time.

Now, the solutions, of course, are many. But I would like to point out a few of them. The main thing that I would like to state is the change of attitude, the change of attitude against so many aspects, which I have already mentioned. It is the change in the society that has to come. It is the change amongst us that has to come. It is the change in all walks of life, in all spheres where we are working, that has to be brought out. Now, I would think that education is one thing where much can be done in bringing up the social change. But education does not mean mere education in colleges or schools or even at the primary level but education taken up by so many other agencies is also important. Literacy programmes are also very important and I suggest that the amounts which are earmarked for education and literacy programmes must be increased.

MR. SPEAKER : All those points have been made by other Members.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, I am not detailing them. I only say that the involvement of voluntary organisations must be given a more stress.

Then, the question of low wages regarding exploitation has already been dealt with. But I would like to submit that this is one aspect where not only legislation but also very active struggle by the workers involved is necessary.

Now, regarding jobs, it has been mentioned that equal opportunities are not given to women in jobs. We have so many examples for that. It is agreed by all. But how can we give equal opportunity? That is also one question. How to give equal opportunity to women in jobs? Of course, one thing is reservation. But we cannot expect that by reservation also, jobs can be filled in all spheres. I would suggest that there are areas, where women can go for very good jobs and can earn very much and they have already proved their prominence in very many fields. For example, take nursing. Nursing is one field, where...*(Interruptions)*

MR SPEAKER Please conclude

SHRI PC THOMAS I am concluding my speech I was just submitting that that is one field where the income of women could be increased in a very high way This is one sphere where they have worked so efficiently and throughout the world they have shown that this is a field where they can do well I would suggest that we must go for starting some University for nursing so that in this field more and more people could be involved in the study

Now, in judiciary also, I would also submit that there is a necessity for inducting more participation from the women

Regarding politics, apart from power, which has already been said, I that where *(Interruptions)*

MR SPEAKER Do you favour 30 per cent reservation in State Legislatures and in Parliament?

20 00 hrs.

SHRI PC THOMAS I very much agree

MR SPEAKER Because I got the confusion

SHRI PC THOMAS I think that is a welcome suggestion Unfortunately my Party has got only one Member and I do not know it could be divided

MR SPEAKER The Member will be replaced

SHRI PC THOMAS We accept that this is a very good suggestion and this is something which could be implemented I am only suggesting that apart from this kind of percentage given in the State Legislature, Parliament and in other bodies, we must also see that the political Parties should give representation in all their fora and I think the representation given now is meagre Sir, I am not going into the other points because of paucity of time I thank you very much for the opportunity given

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) Hon members have expressed their view and suggestions in regard to the problem of atrocities on women Without repeating them I will say that uneducated women have become a problem by themselves Therefore the Government should undertake a comprehensive literacy scheme to educate women in all villages throughout the country and bring awareness among them about their rights and status in the society and the courage of fighting against atrocity being committed on them Half of our population constitutes women and they are comparatively less educated than men Therefore there is an urgent need to educate them all even in far off villages They will become strong after getting education and their generation will also be strong from the view point of education We should give education of women

top priority, for which a very comprehensive and inspiring programme of imparting education to all, particularly rural women, should be undertaken by the Government soon

Secondly, social distinction between man and woman in our society will have to be removed to do away with inequality It needs political will power Leaders of all political parties should sit together and pass a unanimous resolution, in this regard Political leaders will have to come forward and start a movement to achieve this objective This work cannot be accomplished by social organisations alone To remove the existing inequality between man and women, which has made woman a burden instead of a responsible part of the society we shall have to translate our unanimous resolution into action with strong will and determination The Government should take initiative to educate and awaken women particularly in villages

The dowry problem has put women in a piquant situation and it is necessary to put an end to it at the earliest to solve the problems of women to a great extent Today even before birth of a child, parents become worried about the possibility of birth of a girl child on account of prevailing dowry system All members of Parliament, Assemblies etc should take a vow not to accept or give dowry on the occasion of marriage of their sons or daughters Political parties should also ask their members to take such vows Only such a strong determination can stop dowry system and reduce atrocities on women

Women should be given equal rights in property When she will get it, a number of her problems will be wiped out For this purpose, a stringent law should soon be brought forward and passed Provision for strict and severe punishments against guilty persons should be made the review this will also help reduce problem of women to a great extent

I will make a suggestion to all political parties and groups to rise above politics and sit together and devise ways and means to put an end to the problem of atrocities on women If the intention of the Government is clear on will power is strong, it can itself implement the existing laws properly and strictly and ensure substantial reduction in cases of atrocities on women, even by amending the law, where considered necessary or desirable

Women is power In our country, she has been worshipped in the form of mother for centuries But today woman instead of being worshipped is being put to same by committing atrocities on her I would urge upon the Government to given sound thinking to this problem and find ways and means for its solution and bring forward a concrete proposal based on the sentiments expressed by Hon Members here, to take appropriate steps If we do not take strong steps now, the situation will worsen further and create a dangerous

situation impossible of solution in future. With these words, I request for early necessary action in the matter.

[English]

SHRI HANNAH MOLLAH (Uluberla): Sir, I join myself with the views expressed in this House by my other colleagues.

First of all, we should remember that it is not only a question of mercy shown to the woman but also it is the duty of the entire society to defend and protect the women. Only woman's upliftment can lead to social upliftment

We need a very strong social reform movement and in that social reform movement this issue should be brought in the fore

So, I will appeal to you that on behalf of the House you may move a Resolution appealing to the whole nation that in this social reform movement, all the political parties, organisations and individuals should join in this great endeavour.

I want to mention one thing more here In the western countries, in spite of material development, the sexual harassment is increasing enormously because of moral and social degeneration We have to fight against this growing menace.

So, along with all the suggestions given by my other colleagues, a very strong social reform movement should be initiated. You can also appeal on behalf of this Parliament to the nation so that we can fight unitedly with this great menace of civilisation...(Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (DUMDUM) : After Shri Tej Narain Singh completes his speech, let the Ministers' response com tomorrow, instead of now.

MR. SPEAKER : I think, if the Ministers' want to reply tomorrow, I will find the time for them to reply tomorrow.

[Translation]

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM LAKHAN SINGH YADAY) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, know only one speaker Shri Tej Narayam Singh has to Speak. only I am listener, all there are speakers.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I think if you want to reply tomorrow, I shall find time for that.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P.M. SAYEED) : Okay, Sir.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : That will be much better, Sir, because then they can think about a comprehensive approach to this problem.

MR. SPEAKR : In a comprehensive and in a complete fashion you can reply tomorrrw - both of you, if you want to.

[Translation]

SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH (Buxar): Mr Speaker Sir, Many types of atrocities are being committed on woman and what ever legal help is provided in the statute book is not made available to them. According to law man and woman should be given equal wages, but they do not get it. Labour laws are there, but labour inspectors do not perform their duty to ensure payment of equal wages to women. Hence, the time has come to change the Act. Penal provisions should be made in the laws for punishing the guilty.

Dowry system has taken toll of many young women. For this not only men are at fault, but women are equally at fault. If father of the boy says that adequate dowry has not been given by parents of the daughter, boy's mother also support him. I think that a woman speaking against another woman is more dangerous.

In films we see women harassing other women in various ways. She doesn't hesitate killing other women. Therefore schools should be opened in all villages to educate them and make them understand that the daughter-in-law is also their sister or daughter. If such education is imparted the rate of dowry deaths can be brought down substantially. If women prepare themselves not to demand or accept dowry, this problem will be solved to a great extent. But it is unfortunate that women too venture to victims and trouble even to the extent of taking life of other women.

Both Hindu and Muslim religions here downgraded women. Muslim women are not permitted to enter a mosque. Among Hindus, only son is entitled to lit the prayer of father. The hatred against women shown in religious traditions should be shunned away.

The population of men and women being equal in the country, women should be provided reservation in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies in proportion to their population, so that they may enter Parliament and Assemblies in increased Numbers.

In government jobs too, there should be reservation for women is under article 256 of Hindu law, daughter cannot get her share until and unless distribution of property takes place between father and son she has got the right of maintenance only. So, there is need to change both Hindi and Muslim laws. If the present day laws are amended suitably and implemented properly, atrocities on women will come to an end.

I congratulate Supreme Court judges, who held that in rape cases medical report is not necessary. Before the law was enacted, there was no necessity of medical report in a rape case and the dependent could not be convicted. But the Supreme Court held that in

the absence of medical report, if a woman gives written statement, the accused can be convicted on the basis of that report. I feel that if such kind of a law is framed, in which even if there is no evidence, the conviction of the accused should be permissible. I feel such a law can put an end to 50% of crimes in the country. I, therefore, think that by effecting necessary amendments in law, atrocities on women can be curbed.

I congratulate and thank Smt. Geeta Mukherjee for raising this socially important matter, and wish her a long life. While expressing my gratitude to the Chair for giving me opportunity to speak, I conclude.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Well, Mr. Minister, when would you like to reply? Will you reply tomorrow?

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Sir, if you permit, the reply can be immediately after Question Hour tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: That will be better. If the reply is immediately after Question Hour, there would be so many Members also. If today we are not in large number, tomorrow, at the time of reply there will be more Members.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Let them also get the benefit of hearing the reply. Sir, both myself and Shrimati Basava Rajeswari will speak.

DR GIRIJA VYAS: Sir, the hon. Minister Shri Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav has been listening all through the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: I think very good points have been made. They can be culled out and pointed replies can be made to the extent possible. There are points made on laws, education, social conditions and coming from perspective plan and so many good points have been made.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Sir, good points on legal education and judiciary were made.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Points on legal education and others were made.

I think you can reply tomorrow.

Well, we would like to thank the hon. Members for showing keen interest in this debate.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: We also thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, you provided us time to speak. We express our gratitude for the same and request for being kind like this in future also.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow, the 26th May, 1995 at 11 A.M.

20.17 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till eleven of the clock on Friday, May 26, 1995/
Jyaishta 5, 1917 (Saka).*