

[English]

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: It has been given in the statement that the Directorate shall entertain the complaint only after the complainant fails to get satisfactory redressal from the concerned Ministry/Department within a reasonable period of time. Therefore, that is being worked out. That will go first to the Ministry concerned and if the Ministry does not dispose of that complaint within a reasonable time, it will directly come to the Cabinet Secretariat and then it will be looked into. Therefore, all these things are there.

SHRI A. CHARLES: There are hundreds of cases in which the grievances are not redressed for a number of years. Now, the hon. Minister has stated that these complaints will be looked into and redressal given within a reasonable time. The word reasonable is always unreasonable. May I know whether a time limit will be fixed, say three months, six months or one year, within which these complaints will be looked into and final reply given?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: We have decided on a time-limit. If this is not disposed of by the Ministry within 3-4 months, then it will directly come to the Directorate of Public Grievances.

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN: Ever since 1947, we have been hearing about grievance cells, but in actual practice nothing happens. I would like to know whether there would be any link between the proposed Grievance Cell here and the State Grievance Cells or not. In almost all the States, we have State Grievance Cells working either under the Chief Minister in some cases or under the Home Minister in the other cases. Many of the States have them. Will the Central Grievance Cell supervise or give necessary advice to the State Governments to dispose of some very

serious grievances with which the States are concerned?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: Once our Directorate of public Grievances works very well, this model we will send to the State Government for looking into the complaints of the people there and help them.

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN: I want to know whether you have a district level Grievance Cell in your scheme of things.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: Central Government offices are also working in different States. If the complaints given to them are not attended to properly, naturally the persons concerned can submit their complaints directly to this Directorate.

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN: My question is regarding the grievances field in the States.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (S. BUTA SINGH). Mr. Speaker Sir, We have no objection to that, if this House thinks it proper, then

[English]

We are prepared to monitor the grievances even in the States through the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Report of US State Department

*308. **PROF. K.V. THOMAS:**
SHRMATI BASAVARAJES-
WARI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of a report of the US State Department which

reportedly mentions that human rights are not protected in India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) While critical of India in some respects, the Report says. "The overall Indian human rights situation in 1987 remained relatively unchanged, but there was some variation in practice from State to State. India remains a basically democratic polity with strong and legally respected safeguards for individuals, but its many domestic difficulties continue to generate significant human rights problems." Obviously, government was not involved in the preparation of the Report and does not share all the assessments contained therein.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Sir, there is a well-organized attempt by private agencies and the agencies of the United States Government to malign India. Attempts are made to create an impression that the minority communities, specially the Sikhs and the Muslims, in India are harassed and their rights and privileges are not protected. What are our emissaries abroad, specially in the United States, doing to give a clear picture of the political events taking place in our country.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: I would have hoped, Sir, that the hon. Member would confine himself to the question which relates to a Report which is being brought out by the United States Department. They bring one out every year. It is mandatory for them to do so and they do it for all countries of the world. We have seen this Report. It has both positive and negative aspects but what I would submit to the House and to the Hon.

Member is that this country does not need certificates from any other country about what it does on human rights and other issues of similar nature. We have seen this Report.

Now, with regard to what our representatives are doing abroad, first of all we have a free Press. People read what is happening here. Newspapers are available and as and when we deem it necessary to bring a particular matter about which we feel strongly, we do so through our Missions abroad and it is being done constantly whether it is United States or any other part of the world.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: There is an attempt to malign our interest through the media in the United States. A very large number of Indians are holding important positions in the United States Government as well as in the private agencies. Similarly there are a large number of our own cultural organisations, like in Kerala. In every city in the United States, we have got a Malayalee organisation. So, what attempt is made, through these persons holding important positions in the United States and other private agencies, as well as through our own organisations, to give a clear picture of the events? If some shooting takes place in Punjab or some communal disturbance is taking place in Hyderabad, very often a distorted picture is given in the media in the United States. What attempt is being made, through our own cultural organisations to give a clear picture of our country?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: There are a very large number of organisations of various Indian communities in the United States. They keep in touch with the Indian Embassy and our consulates General in New York and San Francisco. As I said, whenever a particular incident takes place, it is immediately taken up by our own Embassies. This question relates to a

Report produced by the United States Government on Human Rights. And I am trying to confine my answer to this particular matter only. If the hon. Member wants some more information about what the Indian communities is doing there, he should give a notice and I will satisfy him .

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI: Sir, will the Hon. Minister be pleased to state that the reports which are being published are only to defame India in the eyes of other nations or is it politically motivated? What is the reaction of the Government to it? I would like to know whether such a problem was discussed at the recently held meeting at Geneva.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: The Press in the United States is free. The Press in India is free. They publish all sorts of things every day. Although I do not spend sleepless nights over what they write and I do not think she should do so either if a particular news item appears in the United States. If it is factually incorrect and impinges adversely on our relations with that country, we take it up. I do not know what the hon. Member has in mind about the Geneva meeting. I did not understand her problem. So, could you please repeat it.

SHRI CHANDRA PRATAP NARAIN SINGH: Diplomats ever since do not have sleepless nights.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: You try and give us sleepless nights.

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI: Sir, I did not follow what he said.

SHRI R.L. BHATIA: The Hon. Minister in his reply has tried to give a profile of low key. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether he has a definite information of a Report mentioning about what is happening in India. And if he thinks

that there is one such report, may I know whether the Minister has lodged any protest against them either diplomatically or otherwise to tell them that they have no business to interfere in our internal affairs?

MR. SPEAKER : He does not want to sophisticate the matter.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : We have said this on a number of occasions. If the hon. Member goes through this report, it has some positive and negative aspects. The instances which came to the notice last year was that in August, 1987, 17 Members of Congress wrote to the US Ambassador in the United Nations alleging human rights violations in India about the treatment of sikhs. We immediately took this up with the US Government - both here and in the United States. The US Ambassador to the United Nations Mr. Vernon Walters wrote a letter to these 17 Congressmen. This letter was not altogether to our satisfaction we said so. We immediately took this up. The hon. Member is quite right that when a matter of this kind comes up which gives the picture of India which is distorted and which is likely to arouse passions, we should immediately take it up. We try to correct it as soon as possible, if it is possible, and if necessary at the highest levels.

PROF. N.G. RANGA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that USA as well as India are very keen on developing friendly relations with each other culturally and in other respects also, would the Government consider the advisability that at least now to call their Ambassador here in India and apprise him of the position in regard to the human rights here in our country ? My hon. friend was saying positive as well as negative.

So far as negative things are concerned, you should be able to inform him and then to advise him to see that such

things are not published or not prepared or not acted upon by the U. S. A. which might adversely affect the interests of India.

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : As the hon. Member knows-being the senior most Member of the House it is not an issue which is new and it comes up from time to time. We keep in close touch with the U.S. Ambassador. This Annual Report comes out every year. This is not a unique thing it comes out every year for every country in the world. This is the American system. We cannot change their system. All we can say is that India is a free country and anyone can come and have a look at India. They have a large Embassy here. They have a senior Ambassador here. When we deem it necessary, we bring it to his notice. He reads Indian newspapers. He sees the Indian Television. He meets Members of Parliament. He can go where he likes. And if he is going to give a picture which is distorted, we will certainly put it right.

SHRI V.N. GADGIL : I would like to know from the Minister whether our Government has any proposal to present similar Report about Human Rights violation in the United States?

SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : We have no law which would require us to prepare such a Report, but the House will remember the hon. Member had been a senior Minister himself, he knows that - that in the case of treatment of Blacks in the United States, we have not hesitated to be critical openly both in this House and in the Press or for that matter any other violation by any other country. Why only USA?

Lok Adalats for Dowry Cases

*309. **DR. PHULRENU GUHA:** Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to hold Lok Adalats to settle dowry cases ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) and (b). Civil cases which are taken up at the Lok Adalats cover matrimonial matters including dowry disputes.

DR. PHULRENU GUHA : How many Dowry disputes are pending in the Civil Courts upto 1987 and how many are settled upto 1987?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER : I am sorry, the question is not with reference to the usual courts. The question is with reference to Lok Adalats. What has been explained is that the matrimonial cases that have been disposed of so far according to the Committee on the Implementation of the Legal Aid Scheme is 2979 which include the Dowry cases, but the specific quantum of the dowry cases is not known.

DR. PHULRENU GUHA : I would like to know whether any review of the working of the Lok Adalats has been done so far; if so, what is the quantitative and qualitative feedback regarding the results achieved ?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER : Lok Adalat has been supplementing the work of usual court. According to the information available so far, there were 1658 Lok Adalats that had been held and more than a million cases have been settled. To be precise, 1053616 cases have been sorted out through the process of these Lok Adalats. Having had the experience for quite a few years in the system of Lok Adalat and the Legal Aid Committee, we have gone on for the law itself which this House had passed in the last year. The rules of that law are being now