

15.59 hrs.

**RESOLUTION RE SETPS FOR ROOT-
ING OUT CASTE STRUGGLE**

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House shall now take up the next Resolution, to be moved by Dr. K. V. R. Chowdary, on ' steps for rooting out caste struggle.

Before we take up the discussion on this Resolution, the House has to fix the time. I suggest that a period of two hours can be fixed, unless the hon. Members have got something else to say. Is the period of two hours okay?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then, the time fixed for this Resolution is two hours. Now, Dr.K.V R Chowdary.

DR. K.V.R.CHOWDARY (Rajamundry): I beg to move:

"This House expresses its concern over the caste struggle going on in different parts of the country and urges upon the Government to take urgent steps for rooting it out".

Sir, in the villages, the caste struggle is on the increase.

[*Translation*]

"Mr. Chairman, Sir, I move that "This House expresses its concern over the caste struggle going on in different parts of the country and urges upon the Government to take urgent steps for rooting it out".

I am moving this Resolution as in villages the caste struggle is increasing.

Sir, the caste conflicts in villages throughout the country are going up every-

day. At the dawn of independence every body in the country expected that we will have a casteless and creedless society. Now, even after four decades of our independence that dream remained a dream. We failed to usher in an era and a society which is casteless and creedless society.

In fact the caste struggles are on the increase. We find in news papers everyday the caste conflicts consuming property and life everywhere in the country. What is the main reasons for the conflicts based on caste? There were times when the atmosphere in the villages was quite cordial. There was a perfect understanding and co-operation between different castes and communities. In fact the entire village used to live like one indivisible family. Persons belonging to various trades like weaver, potters, ironsmiths etc. used to lend all co-operation to agriculturists and agricultural workers. That cordial atmosphere and amity between various sections of the society is very much missing now. Political parties are mainly responsible for this changed situation. Political parties encourage one section of the people against the other for their own benefit. They provoke one caste against the other. This mischief played by political parties which pit one against another added fuel to fire. Before independence the situation was different. There were no elections. There was no voting. There was no democracy then. But we have misused our independence. We are not true to democracy. Some time back, Harijans used to be prevented from voting Now we have gone a step ahead. Sir, we see in newspapers that during the bye recent elections, in the very constituency where the Prime Minister himself was a candidate, there were no voters at the polling booths, yet the ballot boxes were full of votes. That is the sort of situation prevailing today. I think once the caste system disappears there will not be much scope for such incidents. People belonging to Scheduled Castes were given certain facilities under the constitution. They were also given a right to move the court if anybody abuses them by their caste names. But what is happening? If

[Dr. K.V.R. Chowdary]

any person lodges a complaint in a police station if somebody belonging to upper caste calls him a Harijan, he is immediately directed to file the case in a mobile court. But are they in a position to go and file a case in any court? We have to understand in what a pitiable condition they are living now. We have to understand the poverty and

16.00 hrs.

Negligence under which the villages are reeling now. Even a farmer, with a maximum allowed land under land ceiling Act is not able to earn as much as a clerk or a typist in Government service earns. In Andhra Pradesh, the ceiling limit is 12 acres. The maximum income that one can expect on a 12 acre holding is around Rs. 30,000 to 35,000. Thus their average monthly income doesn't exceed Rs. 2,500 per month. If this is the position of a farmer with a maximum land allowed under ceiling Act, one can well imagine the position of small farmers with negligible holdings and the agricultural labourers. As though this is not sufficient, the government is imposing all kinds of taxes on these very poor people. The government is not at all bothered about the conditions of the poor in rural areas. The Government has no consideration for these poverty stricken people. The Government has rubbed salt on the wound by increasing the fertilizer prices. Added to these miseries, is the unending castewar which goes on everywhere everyday. False cases of that are being lodged against the Dalits. Certain people encourage the persons belonging to one particular caste to lodge such false cases against the persons belonging to another caste. Naturally there will be a retaliation coming from the other section. This is leading to more and more caste wars every where. Tsundur is a case on the point. Atrocities are being perpetrated on Scheduled Castes every where. So the need of the hour is to root out caste system. If the caste system is not wiped out, we may have to see more and more such atrocities in the days to come. Now Harijans have been given right to file a case against the person who abuses them invoking the caste name.

People belonging to certain castes are provoking some other castes to abuse yet another Scheduled Caste. Thus the people who actually provoke one against the other are being allowed to go scot free. These Scheduled Caste persons who lodge such complaints have to attend the courts quite frequently. They are forced to incur loss of money and time. They are completely deprived of their livelihood. Hence it is better to register all the cases instead of asking them to file the case in a mobile court. We have to understand the condition of a poor man whose monthly income hardly exceeds Rs. 300/- p.m. He is not in a position to go to the court to get justice. Hence we have to see that the poor Scheduled Caste person is spared from this harassment. The Government has to take necessary steps in this direction. The Tsundur and other incidents are the outcome of provocations and retaliations. Going to Court for getting justice is quite justified in other matters. But not in the cases of social injustice. If there is a prima facie case, the case has to be registered promptly and the enquiry should be conducted by DSP. The culprits should be punished immediately. Otherwise this particular facility provided to Scheduled Castes will have no meaning at all. The clashes between Castes will come down.

Now the time has come to think about wiping out caste system for our society. Caste system came into existence on the basis of the profession or trade the people pursued. That was a profession based caste system. Now the times have changed. We are living in a different type of society now. There is no nexus between the caste and the profession any more. The nexus is broken now. Earlier, Brahmins were concerned with religion and teaching, Kashatriyas were the rulers, Vaishyas pursued trade. Potters used to make pots and weavers were only engaged in weaving. Now that is not the position today. No profession is any more restricted to any one particular community. Anybody can do any job now. For example, take weaving. Persons belonging to all the castes are now involved in weaving industry. Even labourers come from all sections and all castes of the society. Earlier only people

belonging to Scheduled Castes were involved in shoe-making. Now we see even Brahmins engaged in the shoe business. There is dignity of labour. Every profession, every trade acquired respect in the society. Hence, when there is no nexus between the caste and the trade, the caste system becomes redundant.

Every one should have proper education. Every one should try to come up. Then only the country can progress. Castes and communities should not divide the nation anymore. We should also think of the steps that we must take to wipe out caste system. Caste-based reservations should be done away with after 10 years. We must take the steps necessary to do away reservations to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward classes. We must try to uplift the people belonging to these sections so that they will be better educated and better placed in the society. We must strive for a society where there is no need for any reservation based on castes or communities. In such a society there will no more be any atrocity on anyone. Everybody will forget his caste. In a profession based society prominence will only be given to the work but not the caste.

Sir, let me say a word about population control. In rural areas, people are not really bothered about family planning. The method of implementation of Family Planning Programme is defective. At present Rs. 120/- are being paid to a person who undergoes an operation. This incentive is not even equal to three days' wages. If a government servant undergoes a family planning operation, he gets the benefit of nearly 40 to 50 thousand rupees. But if a poor villager undergoes an operation, he is being paid only Rs. 120/-. Rupees 30/- to 40/- goes to the doctors and nurses. So he gets the benefit of only Rs. 80/-. How ridiculous is to think that with an incentive which is not equal to the wages of couple of days, the people in the rural areas go for family planning. Everybody thinks of urban areas and nobody is ever bothered about rural areas. Taxes are being imposed only on the rural people. Land Revenue rates are being increased. Cess and drainage cess is also being collected

only from the rural masses. This villages are being sucked out endlessly. Villages are being reduced to a condition where they are not economically viable any more. These poverty ridden villages are becoming the hot beds of caste wars. Atleast now we must pay proper attention to the village development. We must also strive for the unity and amity between different section of society. We must work to create a society where there is no more any need for religion or caste. Our Constitutions speaks of socialistic pattern of society. But unfortunately the present Government is perusing policies which are quite opposite to that cherished goal.

The reservation system should go atleast after ten years. Proper attention should be paid for the around development of the villages. The economic conditions in the villages must improve. In a prosperous and economically sound village, there will not be any caste conflicts. The benefits, like reservation etc. should be applicable to the people belonging to all castes. The Government should also work for the upliftment of the people who are economically backward. Since the nexus between caste and trade is already broken, the Government should take necessary steps that are necessary for wiping out this system. Since all the atrocities are being perpetrated in the name of caste, our efforts should be directed towards elimination of the caste-based society. Development programmes should be undertaken in villages. Thus the energies of the people will be diverted towards development. We should do away with caste-based society. Development programmes should be undertaken in villages. Thus the energies of the people will be diverted towards development. We should do away with caste-based politics. Everybody in the society, to whichever caste or community he may belong to should get equal chances for his advancement. The family planning programme should be made more effective. The incentive has to be quite attractive. Offering incentive of ten to forty thousand Rupees to government employees will not serve the purpose. Hence the incentive for family planning operation to the rural poor should be made more attractive. If crores of people in the rural areas undergo

[Dr. K.V.R. Chowdary]

the operation, then we will succeed in effectively controlling the population growth. Allotting more money for this programme will yield rich dividends later. We have to remember that we are human-beings first. Humanism should be the basis for our policies. We should adopt the policies which are humanitarian. Even among the upper castes, there are many people who are really poor. We must also try to work for their upliftment. Help must go to the needy to whichever caste he may belong to. Let us try to create a society where there is no fear or favour to any one to whichever community or caste he or she may belong to.

Sir, with these words, I move this resolution for consideration and adopted of the House.

[English]

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK (Buldana): Mr. Chairman Sir, I think this Resolution seeking steps to root out caste struggle is one of the most important Resolutions that have come before the House. Since the beginning of the 10th Lok Sabha, in the Budget Session itself, the issue of atrocities was discussed at length and the Government has also come forward with determination to face this problem which has been there in our century for the last several centuries.

The meeting of the Chief Ministers on 4th and 5th October to discuss the problem of atrocities was also one of the most important steps taken by this Government.

Sir, when we are discussing this issue today, I would like to just point out an incident which had happened in the first week of September in the Parbhani District of Maharashtra in a small village called Pimpri Deshmukh. In this village, one Ambadas Savane, a Dalit police constable was guarding a Maruti temple for several years. He was performing a hereditary job of a guard. One night, when it was raining very heavily, the Ambadas Savane just tried to enter the temple

to take shelter from the heavy rain and to protect himself. Though he was guarding that Maruti temple for several years, those people who were sitting inside the temple thought that since Ambadas was an untouchable, a Dalit, he has no right to enter the temple. Therefore, all those assembled in temple pelted stones at Ambadas Savane and he died because of the pelting of those stones.

This clearly indicates Maharashtra which has been a progressive States, there such type of incidents are taking place today. The reports which appear in the press and our visits to parts of Marathwada reveal that still there are places where the Dalits, the down-trodden sections of the society cannot enter the temples. But, Sir, today, the issue is not the entry into temples or to secure a right to enter the temples, the issue before the down-trodden sections of the society is to live in equality with the rest of the sections of the society with dignity. That is what is lacking today.

The Chief Ministers Conference on Atrocities had taken several decisions. I do congratulate the hon. Welfare Minister that ever since he took over this Ministry, he has been vigorously working hard towards evolving strategies, programmes and action plans to give justice to the weaker sections, the down-trodden people. But however hard and committed the Welfare Minister may be, the people who have been sabotaging the efforts of the Government of a Welfare State, they will try to sabotage the Government's efforts today also. The Chief Ministers Conference had decided that the backlog of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes vacancies will be cleared by 31st March, 1992. We have only four months' time.

SHRI MORESHWAR SAVE (Aurangabad): Sir, there is no Quorum in the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Quorum Bell be rung.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, there is Quorum.

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK:

I was saying that we have just four months' time. The backlog is huge. The backlog in Group A Services of the Central Government, it is 5331 for Scheduled Castes and it is 1393 for Scheduled Tribes. The backlog in Group B Services of the Central Government, it is 10497 for Scheduled Castes and it is 2222 for Scheduled Tribes. The backlog in Group C Services of the Central Government, it is 3,36,880 for Scheduled Castes.

And for STs the backlog is 1,71,33. In Group D, for SC, it is 3,21,795 and for ST 72,353. Such a huge backlog we have with us.

The Government has committed to complete it in the presence of all the Chief Ministers; not only that, they have tried to take all the Chief Ministers into confidence; and all the Chief Ministers and the Union Government put together have decided that in four months, by 31st March, 1992, we are going to complete the backlog.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Backlog in what?

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK:

Backlog of SC & ST in employment. I have quoted the figures of backlog in the various groups.

Earlier, on several occasions, whether it was any Government of any party, such type of commitments have been made. The Constitution provided that in the first ten years of the Republic we will provide reservation facilities this will be implemented properly and with that we will try to uplift the weaker-sections, the down-trodden sections of the society. Ten years passed. We failed to provide justice; we failed to provide equality; we failed to provide equality; we failed to provide employment; we failed to provide education; and we failed to provide jobs. This period had to be extended; it has been extended four times. Now I want to ask the hon. Minister that if by 31st March, 1992, whether it is the Union Government or the State Government, they failed to fulfil the backlog of SC&ST, then what will follow from there?

SHRI P M SAYEED (Lakshadweep):

You ask the Minister to lift the ban.

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK:

About the ban, the Minister of State for Personnel and Administrative Reforms has said in a statement that special recruitment drive has been undertaken. This is the reply of the Minister. The reports actually say that there is a ban on fresh recruitment in the Central Government/Ministries and Departments. Since the hon. Minister was not here and has come just now, I would like to repeat it. If by 31st March, 1992, the decision of the Chief Ministers' Conference to complete the backlog of SC&ST is not fulfilled, then what is going to follow from there because the backlog is huge and the drive which has been undertaken by the Government as a special drive with regard to SC&ST, that drive has got no mining at all.

Apart from this, about the atrocities also, that Conference has taken several decisions. Atrocities have been increasing year after year. The latest figure shows that last year the crimes against SC were 6810 against ST 3572.

Section 4 of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act provides for action against those officers who have will-fully neglected their duty in implementing this Act. Till date, there have been no officers who have faced any action under this Section. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to see that steps should be taken to enforce this Act effectively.

Several things have been happening which have been against the interests of the weaker sections. But yesterday only in Maharashtra a decision, following the measures decided in the Chief Ministers' Conference was taken to appoint 38 Additional Collectors everywhere in Maharashtra specially to deal with cases relating to atrocities and problems of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. And I think that such measures, if taken everywhere in the country, may help to resolve the problem as early as possible.

[Sh. Mukul Balkrishna Wasnik]

various forms of the caste-conflicts.

I am just winding up.

There have been many things, but other speakers would also be taking up different points. One point about which within Parliament and outside Parliament several organisations have been demonstrating and taking up the issue is concerning the recognition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Employees' Association. Those employees from the weaker sections who have been facing difficulties, whether those of casteism, whether it concerns promotion postings, want that the Government should recognise their association. Unless and until the Government recognises these associations, even if they have to be present at the meetings called by the Parliamentary Committee on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the management does not give them permission to attend the meetings and therefore they have to take leave to attend such meetings. Not only that. The non-recognition has created several problems and therefore I will request the hon. Minister to take up this issue and see that the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Employees Association is given recognition as early as possible.

Lastly, I congratulate the hon. Minister, once again, for this zealous efforts. We will try to contribute from out side whatever strength is required to implement the Governments commitments and with this I conclude.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer):
Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the resolution moved by Dr. K.V.R Chowdary. In fact, the caste-conflict is growing day by day in the country. The casteism is the main reason of it. The recent elections in Bihar, the efforts to arraign a section against the other in the name of Mandal Commission in the country, the atrocities committed on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the clash between Brahmin and Non-Brahman or Jat and Rajpoot or so on are the

We should not be narrow minded and go on repeating that back-log of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes be cleared. The conflict and race ; among the upper-castes against one another, division of votes on caste lines and incitement to communalism to gain political mileage are major threats to the country.

Sir, through you I would like to say to the hon. Minister also to think for a while about the factors responsible for the caste-system taking roots in our country before I draw the attention of this House towards these evils of the casteism and caste-conflicts. I am not supporting the casteism any way. It is a stigma on the country and a major obstacle in the way of democracy. Its absolute eradication from the very root of the country will bring only the caste-conflicts to an end. Our main granth 'Ved' tells 'MANURBHAVA' which means be a human. Our bages in order to strengthen the social system contemplated VARNASHRAM. They inserted the MANTRA, BARAHMANOASYA MUKHMASIT, BAHOO RAJANYAKRITAH in it. Sometimes the meaning of the Mantra is interpreted wrongly. It means that our society is a body of which Brahman is a unit only whose duty is to contemplate. And the right to meditate was not based on Birth. In the then society, the group of thinkers was begun to be called Brahman. The Brahman was compared like a mouth to the social body. It was based neither on caste nor on Birth.

'BRAHMANOJASYA MUKHMASIT,
BAHOO RAJANYA KRITAH'

Those are Brahman who are diligent in knowledge and meditation it and who try to emancipate the society as a whole. A man does not become a brahaaman just for his birth in a Brahman family. Maharishi Vyas became a Brahman for possessing a great knowledge and Valmiki despite his low-birth was categorised as Brahman for his great deeds. The 'Ved' also provides;

"AJYESHTHASAH AKANISHTHASAH"

one is neither high nor low. Even Yogeshwar Krishna has said in Gita.

"CHATURVARANYAMAYASRISHTAM GUN KARM VIBHA-GSHAH"

The four Varnas have been created on the basis of virtue and deeds. The ved tells, "AJAYESHTHA-SAH AKANISHTHASAH" which means one is neither high nor low.

"SAHGCHACHHDHWAM SAMWADHAWAM, SAMANO MANTRAH SAMITI SAMANI"

The word 'Society' was derived from the veda and it was based on equality. A man according to his merits or demerits could be a Brahman or Shudra. At that time neither the Brahman suffered from superiority complex nor the Shudra from inferiority. Both felt themselves just a man only. Today also even in the western countries there is a division of labour. Someone becomes a machanic, some a mistiry, some a army personnel, some a businessman and trader. Any one is not expert in every field. Like-wise our Rishis also had set up a system of varna without having a feeling of high or low. Unfortunately, during the medieval when the country was enchained in slavery, some of the persons become the custodians of religion, who confined education limited to a few. They in order to keep themselves higher pushed back the rest of the society at bottom.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Rishis of India also had propagated that we all are the children of one God. Each of us born in this land of India irrespective to our castes is the child of same God who is our parent. They did not suffer from the feelings of higher lower. All of our saints repeated the same thing. All the social reformers such as Guru Nanak, Kabir, Dadu, Eknath, Gyaneshwar, Sant Tukaram, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekanand, Ram Krishna Paramhansa, Mahatama Gandhiand Raja Ram Mohan Roy etc. have always opposed the caste-system. It must be opposed even today and then only the harmony and

spontaneity can prevail in the society. But unfortunately, it has increased instead of decreasing after the freedom. Earlier the Arya-Smajis did not write Surnames denoting their castes before their names as a result of Arya Samaj movement launched in Punjab and Haryana many persons beonging to the so called low-castes after their studies in the Gurukuls became pandits, scholars and well-positional men. No one could say that he was of this or that caste. But later on they approached top the chiefs and patrons of the Arya-Samaj to obtain the caste-certificates as from it they were able to get the reservation benefits. The caste-system has further strengthened in the name of reservation. I am not against this facility. It should be continued but in its name to create a conflict between one class and other and a feeling of back-wards and forwards in the society is not conducive. There is a separate caste-system even among the lower castes. They too have a sort of conflicts among them selves. Those who have become educated, well positioned or have become a parliamentarian take the men of their own caste as some what inferiors. They hesitate to talk with their own men.

Mr. Chairman, Sir it is urge of the time that there should not be difference between what we say and what we do The caste-stem is a barrier to democracy. In the elections all the parties should issue tickets on the basis of ability, popularly and performance of work(not on the caste). Ticket is given to the person belonging to a particular caste which is dominant in a particular area. This trend leads to casteism. Vote and daughter should be given to a person of the same caste. This feeling is an obstacle to democratic process. I am not blaming any single political party. All political parties are responsible for it. I would like to submit that if we discourage casteism in this august House in which all the citizens of the country have deep faith and from which the entire country seeks guidance, it will be a right step. Therefore, it would be the best thing if we take a pledge here that we will stop using surnames and make a law that no surnames would be used with the names of children in schools. Thus nobody will know the surnames and thus all feelings

[Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat]

of superiority and inferiority will come to an end.....(Interruptions)..... Hon. Members, please do not oppose the good ideas.....(Interruptions).....

SHRI AYUB KHAN (Jhunjhunu): Why is this changed atmosphere today?

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Sir, all of us would create such atmosphere and the Parliament of this country would contribute to it. Laws are there that the untrouchability is a sin and that it is a criminal offence but in spite of all that there are narrow-minded people in society. Some are ignorant and some have a sense of pride for their caste and due to this people misbehave with people of other castes. It is a stigma on all. This was not the intention of the people who had knowledge of religion. Religious matters slipped into the hands of some unscrupulous people when the country was enslaved and they misinterpreted our religion, otherwise one and all were free to visit temples. God is not the privilege of any single community. Therefore, all these factors should be kept in mind.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to submit all his because we are here to shoulder many responsibilities. Though we make many submissions in this House in this regard but in our practical lives outside Parliament we instigate casteism. People of different castes cannot enter any polling booth to cast their vote to the candidate belonging to some other caste. Lathis are wielded there.

Fight among people takes place and the people of weaker sections are not allowed at all to caste their vote. If the struggling parties happen to be equally powerful, a fierce fight breaks out which knows no end. After the elections are over and people are elected, even then tension and struggle among castes continue. This caste tension and caste struggle are harmful to the nation and to the society. Therefore, I would like to urge the Government to put casteism to an end.

I would like to submit one more thing,

reservation must be there, backlog must be cleared but society must not be divided. United society is a must. Our society would disintegrate if attempts were made to divide it on caste lines and the evils inherent in it were highlighted. Consequently the nation would disintegrate and if nation disintegrates, our existence will be jeopardised. Therefore, we should rise above our petty political interests and oppose this casteism and caste struggle tooth and nail and not allow it to thrive anywhere.

Tolerance has been the greatest quality of Hinduism. Sir, 'Live and let live' has been our motto. Keeping in view our principle of "Unity in Diversity", we should forget all our differences of opinions and get united. We all are the citizens of the same country, the children of Mother India and sons and daughters of one God. Therefore, we should all unite to root out the evils in our society. We should not try to disintegrate it by highlighting its evils. Education and laws relating to social welfare should be propagated to the maximum possible extent and the status raised but the benefits that should have accrued to weaker sections has not accrued to them. The poor becomes poorer and the rich richer. Reservation on economic grounds should be made for all irrespective of castes. With these words I welcome the Resolution. I would also submit that if a person is found

[English]

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARAYA (Jadavpur): Sir, there can be no doubt whatsoever that as the Motion says there has been a very real accentuation of caste struggle for the last 10-15 years in this country. Of course, caste struggle has become more visible. It is coming up more in media. It is being registered by the public. But, even apart from that we think that there is a very real accentuation of caste struggle as well. Why has there been this accentuation of caste struggle?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Caste or class

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARAYA: It is not that caste oppression

had not been there before. Some of our speakers have spoken about the ancient times. But, when, as we have been told, cast was based on professional differentiation, even then one profession was considered to higher than the other. The then power structure in the society had utilised caste and caste oppression even at that time. If this has not been so, then in our ancient Hindu epics, we would not have had the myth about Shambhuka who was beheaded by Rama himself and about Eklavya whose thumb was cut-off. We would not have had this myth. This myth shows that the hegemony, the power structure in that society had to be maintained and caste was even at that stage an instrument of that. However, now we are moving towards the 21st Century. When we are moving towards the 21st Century, we find that all these ancient evils of our society are being resuscitated in a stronger form and the castiest poison is spreading all over our social fabric. Now, I would like to say that this castiest evil in the present day is not just the remnant of certain old social evils, but it is, at the same time, a new phenomenon. I would say that the new ruling classes of India in the 20th Century find caste still useful in maintaining their social and political hegemony and that is why caste continues to be there in India moving towards the 21st Century. Otherwise, in spite of equality being prescribed for every citizen of India, irrespective of caste, creed, community, in spite of forty four year during which reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been there, why is it that only a very small segment of the so-called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been able to get the benefits of these reservations? You know in some of the ancient Hindu scriptures, *shudras* and women have been equated. Punishments to be given to *shudras* and punishments to be given to women are similar and even today there is some analogy between the social space allowed then. That is why I am saying that just because we in India have had one woman Prime Minister, just because we have had some one or two women in very high places, that does not reflect the general status of women. Similarly, a few people from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in high places in society

do not reflect the general status of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. It is my submission that if the party which has been in power in India for the lengthiest time of the last forty-four years had been serious about this, if they had observed how the inequalities are persisting, then they would have surely taken other measures, supplementary measures, which would have made reservations redundant by now. Today we would not have to have reservations at all. I am very glad to notice that our young parliamentarian, the hon. Mukul Wasnik has been very candid about the failures of the Government... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK:
Of all government.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARAYA: Yes, all governments. But we have had government by one party for the longest period after Independence.

SHRI INDERJIT (Darjeeling): One short question. Your party has been in power in West Bengal for twenty years. What has your party done towards the elimination of casteism?

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARAYA: Yes, I will come that certainly.

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK:
In the same manner she will also criticise the Bengal Government.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARAYA: Well, if the Bengal Government has in any way been neglectful of the caste situation, I will certainly criticise the West Bengal Government.

SHRI INDERJIT: What has been done constructively, that is what I would like to know.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARAYA: Certainly, Sir, please give me a chance.

Sir, not only that, massive unemployment which is a result of the wrong-headed

[Shrimati Malini Bhattacharya]

policies of the party which has been in power, has made reservation itself a very thorny issue today. Failure to provide employment in general has led to further accentuation of the bitterness between castes. What happened during the anti-Mandal agitation? The students were deliberately provoked by certain motivated political forces and there were certain students from the upper castes who felt that their chances of getting employment were being lessened simply because of the fact that certain new reservations were being introduced. So, these misguided young people thought that the cause of unemployment was reservations, whereas this is not at all so. If, in fact, the Government had succeeded in lessening the employment problem, then we would have found that caste tension also would have been lessened.

Again, I would say that if the various modes of land reforms- I do not mean revolutionary land reforms but land reforms in accordance with the Constitution, such as, the provisions regarding the land ceiling, giving of land to the landless, giving *bargadars* their right to till a particular piece of land - had been implemented by the government, by the different State Governments in the different States also, then I feel that caste tension would have been lessened by this time.

I now come to West Bengal. As a matter of fact in West Bengal- through a series of peasants' struggles, I am not saying that this is just because of the Left Front Government, but there has been a long series of peasants' struggles - it was possible to bring together the peasants in accordance with the class line rather than the caste line. The oppressed in the agricultural sector, the exploited in the agricultural sector, the landless peasants, the agricultural labourers, the small and middle peasants have all congregated, came together within the ambit, under the umbrella of the peasants' struggle and they struck out against the big landlords. So, through a series of peasants' struggles, we have been able to bring the exploited in the agricultural sector together and finally after the coming

of the Left Front Government certain preliminary and elementary land reforms had been enacted. This is by no means the ultimate of what we want to do. We cannot do it within this Constitution. But what little of land reforms we have done succeeded in not only giving the poor peasant self-confidence but also at the same time it has reduced the caste tension in the countryside.

Of course, the caste differences are still there. I do not say that people in West Bengal have risen above casteism. It is not that at all, because West Bengal is not isolated. Whatever happens in the rest of India, it is reflected to some extent in West Bengal as well. But, we have been able, through land reforms, to ease and hold in control this casteist poison. The space within which it can spread has been reduced.

Now, in the Resolution it is said that:

This House expresses its concern over the caste struggle going on in different parts of the country and urges upon the Government to take urgent steps for rooting it out*.

You cannot root out the caste struggle because the struggle will always be there, so long as caste oppression is there. What has to be rooted out? While I completely agree with this Resolution, I would at the same time, like to say that if you want to root out caste struggle, you can only do it by rooting out caste oppression. Why is there, today, accelerated and accentuated caste struggle? It is there because oppressed people are now fighting back. They are no longer prepared to be subdued. They are no longer prepared to obey whatever the casteist society tells them that enhances their oppression.

16.54 hrs.

[SHRI P.M. SAYEED *in the Chair*]

They are not prepared to take it lying down. This is precisely because the 'so-called' lower castes are struggling. I say 'so-called' because I certainly do not think that they are really low. They have been kept low.

Now they do not want to remain low, any longer. This is precisely why the struggles are accentuated. It is because that the political struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor is becoming more intense that caste struggle also, apparently is becoming more intense. Sometimes we find that what is actually a struggle between the landlord and the peasant is couched in caste terms. Actually it is not a caste struggle. Actually it is a struggle for the peasants' rights. Actually it is a struggle for land. Actually it is a struggle for the agricultural labourers' demands for wages. But it gets couched in caste terms because it suits the oppressor. Sometimes, also we find that wherever there is the struggle against oppression there is deliberate effort by motivated forces to divert it, to give it a casteist turn and I think that all of us who pride ourselves as being citizens of India, it is our duty to divest the struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed of these caste terms, from these communal terms and to put this struggle in its proper position because this is a struggle which is a just struggle, it is a struggle which has to be carried forward and therefore, its casteist husk has to be removed and the real core of the struggle, the content of the struggle has to be brought out.

Sir, at the end I will say that much has been said about reservation. I have also expressed my own views about reservation. Of course, in our society there is still rampant inequity on the basis of caste—not just on the basis of class, but also on the basis of caste. There are certain Scheduled Tribes, there are certain Scheduled Castes who, apart from being economically some of the most deprived sections in society are also socially disadvantaged. Can you imagine that in free India a person can be burnt to death for drinking water out of a well? A well is reserved for the upper castes and if a person does not belong to the so-called upper caste, if that person drinks water out of that well, he or she is burnt to death. Can we imagine it? Is this the modern India that we pride ourselves about? Our hon. Member Mukuiji has mentioned the incident in Marathwada. There is not just one Marathwada in India today, there are many

many, hundreds and thousands of Marathwadias and so long as this inequality is there, there is no question of going away with the reservations. However, it has to be admitted by the Government that so far it has done very little by way of taking measures which would make reservation meaningful and - subsequently at a stage would render reservations meaningless. For this, I think I have already suggested certain measures. These measures are land reforms, these measures are giving our people the right to employment, universal employment has to be there because without employment, without the opportunities for employment being widened, social tensions will increase and these will increase in the name of caste, in the name of community—one person in a community will say that 'because of the other community I am not getting any job'. A person in one caste will say that 'because of this other caste I am not getting any job'. This is the perversion, you see, of the social reality; these perversions will go on so long as the basic problems of unemployment, so long as the basic problem of the land in the country remaining in the hands of very few people will be there. So, land reforms, guaranteeing of employment to the citizens of India and literacy, universal compulsory literacy, the barest minimum for which is that schooling should be made free, should be effected.

17.00 hrs.

In West Bengal schooling has been made free and today we find that because schooling has been made free, there has been a certain sense of dignity among the poor and there has been a sense of self-confidence among the poor. They feel that they can get education. The children who could not cross the threshold of schools are now coming to schools. So free compulsory school education is a must.

Sir, I remember an anecdote which was narrated to me by a very old folk artist in West Bengal. He is from the Scheduled Caste and he is over 70 years now. When he was very young, he had gone to the school. Even though he was from Scheduled Caste and even though his family was very poor, he

[Shrimati Malini Bhattacharya]

was sent to school. They used to earn their living by dacoity, but somehow the child has been sent to school. When he wants to school, he was not allowed to sit on the same bench with other boys. One day, a new Head Master came to the school. When he saw this young boy sitting on a *chattai* and the other boys sitting on the benches he went to this lad— took him by hand led him to the bench and made him sit there. The old folk artist said with tears in his eyes that that turned the entire course of his life. After that day, he could recognise himself to be a citizen of India, as one with equal rights with other citizens of India. I think that this anecdote shows that what had been an individual incident, if that had been the general scenario, then the problem that we are talking of today would have been a non-problem by now. So, I conclude my speech supporting this Resolution.

SHRI P.C. CHACKO (Trichur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we are deliberating on a very important and very vital subject which is agitating the conscience of every Indian citizen. Unfortunately, this subject also happens to be a subject matter of apportioning blame politically. Even seasoned Members and so-called senior Members also are viewing this subject not in a dispassionate manner, but in a highly sectarian manner and that is one thing which pains me very much. I am supporting this Resolution moved by the hon. Member irrespective of the party consideration. Every Member in this House every Party and every section of this House will agree in supporting the government and extending the government all support to root out this evil. I would like to go back a little into the history of this very subject.

Sir, my friend from BJP was almost supporting '*chathurvaryam*'. It takes us back to almost five thousand years when people were divided on caste basis. When this '*chathurvaryam*' was introduced in the society, this evil started and it is still being perpetrated in our society. A modern '*chathurvaryam*' is being inflicted upon the society by the political masters. That is the

unfortunate tragedy of the society. We have been seeing in recent times also that for political gain, many of the political parties, those who champion the cause of social transformation, are also using this caste to further their causes.

This is unfortunately the saddest part of it. The caste system which is in the blood and in the society is very very deep rooted. To root out that one has to be mentally reformed. Mrs Malini Bhattacharya was saying that because of the peasant struggle in Bengal things have changed. I do not know in which world she is living. I am coming from a State where most revolutionary land reforms are being practised. It is not only a matter of Bengal but also of Kerala. It is not the contribution of communism. It is the contribution of the national movement started much before communism. I am not opposing them, what I am trying to, these land reforms alone are not going to help. If anybody wants to suggest something, they put the blame on the Government. Unfortunately for anything Marxist anticongress jargons have become very unbearable. Mrs Bhattacharya says it is not possible to do anything within the Constitutional framework. Now ultimately where is the trouble? The trouble is with the Indian Constitution! The poor Indian constitution has been made the ultimate victim. After 75 years of practising communism in the Soviet Union, ultimately as they have said, the State is withering away. We are witnessing the withering away of Soviet Union. That is happening, Do not blame the Constitution but blame ourselves.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: I have not blamed the Constitution. I consider our Constitution to be a very progressive one.

SHRI P.C. CHACKO: You said, it is not possible in the constitution. I was very carefully hearing your speech. I have great appreciation for you.

It is said that eradication of unemployment is not possible; eradication of castelism is not possible. You finally find a solace in blaming the Constitution, blaming the system.

You said what the constitution has achieved during the last 40 years> Madam your Party and my Party, all the Parties in the House are equally guilty of this. Even today take your child to a school. There is a column, what caste do you belong to. The poor child does not know which caste he or she belongs to and asks the mother in the evening. This is in the mind, not in the system; not in the constitution, not in west Bengal or Maharashtra. This is in our mind. Are we prepared to root out this?

Here, the reservation was introduced by the Congress Government. We know the evil of caste system which has been prevailing in the country for centuries and generations has to be rooted out. With the social outlook, those who were deprived of the benefits and progress of the society have to be brought forward. For that the Congress Government has introduced reservation and that the Congress Government has introduced reservation and that is being improved on many occasions. If there is any shortcoming in that, it is something which we together have to work and improve upon it.

Now what is happening? The society in India, especially in U.P. and Bihar is divided on caste line. Who are the protagonists of this? Can the Left Parties in this House without a prick of conscience deny that? You are supporting those people who are surviving and thriving on caste feelings who are fomenting caste feelings. For their votes they are depending solely on caste feelings. You may all recollect the famous theory of Dr. Lohia. He said, "In India not class struggle, but caste struggle is going to survive." It is an unfortunate situation in the country. Even today, even at the fag end of the 20th century, what the progressive, so-called Left Parties are doing? They are going and supporting the Parties which are fomenting communalism and casteism. That is their one-point programme against the Congress government. This anti-Congressism has reached a stage where nothing can be seen in its reality. This negativism is taking you to supporting caste with all your tall claims and declarations. It is happening.

I have a very few suggestions to make

I support the spirit of this resolution.

If you apportion the blame politically, if X Government is in the State, then you say that that government is responsible. Shri Ram Vilas Paswan has raised some issues here and he has narrated some events which have happened in Jawaharlal Nehru University which is one of the most outstanding and prestigious institutions of this country. What has happened there is not a matter of credit to any party. It is not a single party's concern. Every one of us should feel ashamed of that. This Government with all powers at its command, should deal with such people very sternly. But, at the same time, this caste feeling which is in the mind of the people is allowed to develop a natural growth. That is being allowed. That is being given a dignity. That is being given a position in the society. That unfortunately is happening. So, the progressive parties, the left parties, should once for all decide that even if you lose the election, even if you lose the government, you will not support any casteist party for votes' sake. Can you take a decision like that? This is unfortunately the present situation in this country. Every political party has to take a decision. You may say that, more than anybody else, probably the Chaturvamam is responsible for this problem. It has resulted in this problem. But today who is responsible for propagating this problem? One has to ask his conscience.

Anything in our curriculum, in our educational institution, including the very application form which a child or her parent is filling up to get admission, there this provision of caste will arouse the feeling should be completely eliminated. Many incidents are happening because of this. If more such incidents are happening, some people are happy. They find a joy in it. That should not be the attitude. Stern action should be taken whichever Government it is, whichever party it is, and whichever State it is. We are united on this point. We should have a healthy mental attitude towards this problem. At least we can have a beginning here. It may take many more years to solve this problem. We

[Sh. P.C. Chacko]

cannot treat this problems on a par with the problem of land reforms. Land Reforms are implemented completely. Caste is still ruling the roost. So, this is only peripheral approach. This is only a superfluous and negative approach to this problem. If we give up this negative approach to this problem, then we can solve it.

My humble request is, let us have a fair and proper analysis of the problem. If we are unable to identify the problem, in its true sense, then we are never this going to solve problem.

The joint action of all the political parties and a consensus among all the major political parties can only find a solution to this very vital and basic issue. I hope the Government will try to bring it about either through the national integration council or in some such forum. The Government should try to evolve a code of conduct. All the major political parties should come to a common opinion, a common code of conduct. There should be a common action programme. Then only this evil can be rooted out, at least contained, or at least controlled to a possible extent.

With these words, I support the spirit of this resolution.

[*Translation*]

SHRI PIUS TIRKEY (Alipurduars): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government has certainly made some efforts to fight casteism in our country but these are not enough. Our religion is also responsible for casteism. If casteism ends, Hinduism is likely to end. Without a Brahmin no religious ceremony can be performed. Scheduled Caste people cannot sit with Brahmin to perform 'Puja' because if it is done, God will become their enemy. No tribal can become a Shankaracharya. One must be Brahmin for

Caste system is still continuing....(*Interruptions*)

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: By saying so he is encouraging caste struggle...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Pius Tirkey, this is not in good taste.

[*Translation*]

SHRI PIUS TIRKEY: Hasty enactment of law cannot help in abolishing this evil. We must contemplate seriously to find out the methods to root out this social evil. Vested interests in society promote such things. though people occupying high offices succeed in getting their children married in other casts but it is not possible for the people of poorer sections. Unless you raise their social status, this evil will continue to spread in our society.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, as you know this is a vast country. People speak many languages here. We cannot force anybody to speak a particular language. People wear different clothes. Conditions differ in even Urban and rural areas. Regionalism is also gaining ground now. In all these diversities there is a sort of unity also. But equal participation of people is absent. Even in Delhi many good schools are there for education of children. You are following a dual policy, on the one hand you talk of abolition of English schools and on the other hand, you promote English. A quiet different scenario exists in schools in the States. In Bengal Bengali is taught. Similarly, Hindi in Bihar, Tamil in Madras and Telugu in Andhra Pradesh is taught. Here in Delhi Tamil speaking and Telugu speaking people teach their children English. Good convent schools should also be opened in rural areas. Children are unable to get good education there. The statistics reveal that huge funds are spent on education in Delhi. That is why the people living in Delhi consider themselves fortunate and everyone tries settle here. so long as this imbalance in development continues, the malaise would be there.

**Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

Majority of people take recourse to different planks at different occasions for their interests. Sometimes they choose caste, sometimes religion and at other time they choose language. This trend should also be contained and they should be united. Now coming to the atrocities committed on Harijans, I ask who is responsible for that is going on? If the person responsible for this belongs to this party, then he should be expelled from the party at once and if the representative present in this House is elected by the members of a particular community, then that community should not vote for that representative in future. Why are such atrocities on Harijans not committed in West Bengal though there are upper castes? It is because political consciousness is there. They change the rulers when needed. If people of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes do not change their way of thinking and always go on following other footsteps, they would always be the loser. Such things do not occur in West Bengal, though a vast majority of Scheduled Castes is there. No Brahman or upper caste person can do any harm to them. If any upper caste person dares, he will be discarded by the people of his own caste. Therefore the people belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and people belonging to weaker sections should also rethink in political terms. Otherwise the same assurances would continue to be given here. Some Minister declares that quotas of reserved seats would be fulfilled, good schools would be opened in villages and all these schemes would start before 31 of March. People are fed up with such assurances.

Why are the people of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes unable to safeguard their rights even in independent India. We should seriously think over the matter. Cases of atrocities have come to light where people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been killed, ladies have been set on fire and children have been burnt alive at some places. Such incidents also occur in Delhi. This means that the process of political consciousness should be accelerated. I do not hold the opinion that they can be educated overnight and education is

not everything if it does not change their line of thinking.

There was nothing perpetual about one's religion. People embraced Islam to escape atrocities by Muslims. Sometimes they embraced Hinduism. There were occasions when they sought safety with tribals, they embraced some other religion. Now if any way is left for them, it is to join a political party. If the Congress cannot protect them from atrocities, they would not even support the congress. They would have to come forward with dignity now.

Casteism would end only when we are able to end all educational and economic disparities. then nobody would be able to remove us from power. Land reforms are the need of the hour. Agricultural labourers own small pieces of land i.e. one fourth of the total land and those who never do farming work, own 3/4 of the total farming land in India. The Government has the right to acquire all that land and distribute it among the landless poor people of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes within a period of two or three months who are the real tillers. Only then it could be said that the intentions of the government are clear and it is prepared to fight casteism.

[English]

SHRI PALA K.M. MATHEW (Idukki):
Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak a few words on this most vital issue agitating the minds of the people all over the country.

Sir, the Resolution consists of two parts. One is the concern of all of us over the caste struggle going on in the country. There is no dispute about that. And the other one is urgency of exterminating the caste struggle in the country. Now so many suggestions have been made by my preceding speakers and I do not want to repeat any of the problems or suggestions which have already been made here. We know what are the goings on regarding the caste struggle in the country. The caste struggle, the caste structure and other problems connected with

[Sh. Pala K.M. Mathew]

the caste struggle are well known to everybody and it needs no elaborate repetition. And I do not want to go into that. The challenge before us is how to blot it out. How to eradicate this evil which is rampant in our society? For that I think we have to go deep into the causes of the caste struggles that are going on in the country. A few aspects of this deep problem have already been discussed here. So it is not necessary for me to go into all that again.

As has already been stated and put forth here, the caste system has come into existence some four or five thousand years ago. Our society is based on *Chaturvarna*, which is at least four thousand years old. This *Chaturvarna*-Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vysyas and Sudras - was based on professional differences and there was a kind of harmony existing in the society. Harmony in the sense that each of the *varnas* accepted the fact that the other has to exist in the society for doing a particular kind of work or job which were allotted to them socially and historically in an informal way. So each caste accepted that the other caste has to exist in the society. I think this has been the case throughout the history. Now the problem especially during the last hundred or fifty years is that this social harmony or harmony of the caste based on *Chaturvarna* has been disturbed and now certain different social equations are coming up. That is the basis of the problem. As some of the hon. speakers pointed out, this is what forms the basis of the present caste struggle and problems and difficulties connected with it.

We know that there are about four or five thousand castes and sub-castes in this country. We have got all the world religions in our country. We have got a thousand odd speaking languages in this country. It is said that India is a country which worships more than thirty lakhs of different gods which means on an average five to six different gods are worshipped in each village. It also means that we are living in a society which has got immense diversity and which if disturbed to a dangerous extent will ruin even the society.

All these different forces, all these different castes, all these different social equations have to be kept in a proper equilibrium so that the society may survive. The problem is, we have to find unity in diversity in the vast diversity.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member, may continue on the next occasion.

17.30 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

Changes in credit Policy of RBI to contain inflation

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House shall now take up the Half-an-Hour discussion. Shri Sharad Dighe.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE (Bombay North Central): Sir, I beg to raise this Half-an-Hour discussion on the points arising out of the answer given by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance on November 22, 1991 to Starred Question No.24 regarding changes in credit policy of RBI to contain inflation.

Sir, the question on 22.11.1991 on this subject, in its part (a) read like this:

"Whether the Reserve Bank of India announced in October 1991 certain changes in its credit policy with a view to curbing and containing inflation."

The answer was: "Yes Sir."

Part (b) of that question was:

"If so, the details thereof".

The answer was:

"The key changes made by the Reserve Bank of India in the credit policy included a one per cent point