

Exploitation of Women through Devadasi System

1283. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite abolition of bonded labour and bondage in different forms, the Devadasi system still flourishes in different States, especially in the South Indian States in the name of marriage of girls with God or the Deity culminating in their sexual exploitation and flesh trade; and

(b) if so, what is Government's information in this regard and steps Government have taken and are taking to abolish this practice and to emancipate and resettle these women and girls?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT) (KUMARI VIMLA VERMA): (a) and (b) The Devadasi system which was prevalent in some parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Orissa has been legally banned by Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Despite this, there are some reports that dedication in the name of God still continues, clandestinely, on a smaller scale. There is no specific law enacted by the Central Government for prohibiting the devdasi system in the country. However, the commercial aspect of this practice attracts the provisions of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 as amended. This supplements the substantive laws against kidnapping, sale, abduction and wrongful detention of women and girls. The Department of Women and Child Development is also reviewing the provisions of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 in consultation with National Law School of India University, Bangalore for making the provisions of this law more stringent and effective.

The Central Government constituted a Central Advisory Committee to study the problems of child prostitution, which *inter-alia* also examined the problems of Devdasis. The recommendations made by the Committee regarding the legal framework and enforcement of the law banning the practice of dedication and for rehabilitation of Devadasis and their children have been sent to the concerned States for taking necessary action.

The Central Government has sanctioned projects for training and employment for rehabilitation of Devadasis and their children.

The measures taken by the State Governments for this purpose are as follows:

KARNATAKA: A special cell has been created in the Directorate of Women and Child Development. (ii) A Juvenile Home at Soundatti and State Home at Athari to provide education, vocational training and rehabilitation for women, who could otherwise become Devadāsīs, has been set up. (iii) Homeless Devadasi women have been provided Janata Houses in Belgaum District. (iv) Devadasi women have been assisted under DWCRA scheme in Bijapur district. (v) Programmes for rehabilitation of Devadasis in six districts of Belgaum, Bijapur, Bellary, Raichur, Dharwar and Gulbarga have been taken up. (vi) A scheme of assistance for children in difficult circumstances has been introduced to provide educational incentives for the children of Devadasis.

ANDHRA PRADESH: (i) Provision of free home sites/housing facilities for Devadasi women; (ii) Children of Devadasis are given preference in admission in schools and Vocational training institutes; (iii) Devadasis above 60 years of age are sanctioned pensions and Land is also provided to Devadasis on a preferential basis; (iv) Various programmes for skill developments such as polishing, soap making, papad making, candle making, exercise book making etc.

are undetaken; (v) State Government proposes to open adult education centres, medical and health care units for Devadasis in each district.

MAHARASHTRA: (i) Financial assistance of Rs.10,000/- is given for the marriage of Devadasis or their daughters; (ii) There are vocational training centres and hostels for boys and girls of Devadasis in some places.

जिला प्राथमिक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम को सहायता उपलब्ध कराने हेतु राष्ट्रीय अनुसंधान दल

1284. श्री अनन्तराय देवशंकर दवे: क्या मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान तथा प्रशिक्षण परिषद् ने जिला प्राथमिक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम को सहायता प्रदान करने हेतु एक राष्ट्रीय संसाधन दल का गठन किया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान तथा प्रशिक्षण परिषद् द्वारा कितने जिलों को शैक्षणिक सहायता देने का विचार है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है?

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय (शिक्षा विभाग में) राज्य मंत्री (डा० कृपासिंधु भोई): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) और (ग) यह सहायता किसी विशेष राज्य अथवा जिले तक सीमित नहीं है बल्कि सम्पूर्ण कार्यक्रम के लिए है।

Misuse of Funds Meant for Welfare Schemes

1285. **SHRI PASUMPON THAKIRUTTINAN:** Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some cases about misuse of funds meant for the poor, under various welfare schemes have been brought to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by Government against the officials, etc. who have misused the funds thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) to (c) Ministry of Welfare is implementing a number of schemes/programmes for the welfare of the poor relating to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and Minorities through the State Government and also the NGOs. Complaints have been received regarding misuse of funds by NGOs receiving grant-in-aid from this Ministry. The details of the complaints received during the last three years and the action taken thereon are given in the enclosed statement. (see below)

After in-depth monitoring and discussion of various programmes of this Ministry particularly relating to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, it has come to the notice that funds released are not being promptly and properly passed on to the implementing agencies and proper utilisation of the same is also not being ensured by some of the State Governments. For instance, it came to the notice in October, 1994 that Rajasthan SC and STs Finance and Development Cooperative Corporation advanced Rs. 20 crores meant for SC development to Rajasthan State Electricity Board. On receiving the information of diversion of Rs. 20 crores by Rajasthan SC and STs Finance and Development Cooperative Corporation to Rajasthan State Electricity Board, further release of SCA to SCP for 94-95 to the State Government was stopped and the State Government was asked to clarify the position of utilisation of the funds. The State Government of Rajasthan confirmed that the State SC and STs FDCC had advanced the said amount to the State Electricity Board in April, 1994 and the Electricity Board returned said amount to the Corporation in October, 1994. As per the latest information furnished by the State Government, the entire amount has now been utilised by the State SC and STs FDCC for the development of SCs.

Similarly, it came to the notice of the government that Bihar Government has