

*Thursday, the 12th September, 1996/21
Bhadra, 1918 (Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the clock,
Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

Re: Constitution (Amendment) Bill to Provide for Reservation to Women in Parliament and State Assemblies

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Bill which was promised to be brought in this Session has not yet been (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it was reported yesterday..... (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us think about it in an orderly manner.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: The Government promised to bring the Bill for providing 33 per cent reservation for women in this Session. We do not want it to be referred to a Select Committee. (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to speak when the Prime Minister is present or now? (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Yesterday, it was reported widely in the Press..... (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Let the Leader of the House assure us that the Bill will be passed in this Session itself.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to rise it when the Prime Minister is present or now?

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Now, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir,..... (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, I would like to say this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have committed to her already. I will call you also later.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Thank you, Sir. When the Bill..... (Interruptions).

THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): Sir, I would like to say this to my hon. lady colleagues whose views I highly respect. I would say on behalf of the Government that we respect their views. (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Please hear us first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: We highly respect their views. The Government is committed to giving the percentage that has been mentioned to women in parliament and in Assemblies. That is No. 1. I, for one, would personally get credit because I was the first man to move a non-official Bill on the subject from there. We will pass it. (Interruptions).

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (Karnataka): We want it passed in this Session.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: I assure the hon. Members that the Bill shall be passed in this Session.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, I would like to say this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Make it very brief.

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I would like to mention that in the Rajya Sabha, there is no reservation for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the OBCs. That must also be considered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let her speak now. I will give you a chance. (Interruptions). Please let us be quiet. After all, if there are 30 per cent women, then we will have more trouble. Sorry.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, this is an important question of

providing reservation of 33½ per cent for women in the Lok Sabha. The Electoral reforms Bill which was supposed to be passed in this Session with special reference to reservation for women in the Lok Sabha has not yet been passed though the Government gave us a solemn assurance. I moved an amendment. The Government gave us a solemn assurance that it would be passed in this Session itself. Now, Sir, we hear from newspaper reports that there is a possibility of its being referred to a Select Committee. We all oppose this. It should not go to a Select Committee. We should first pass it in this Session itself. The Minister has given many assurances. Mr. Ramakant Khalap gave us an assurance that this would be brought in this Session itself. I condemn the Government for not having brought it earlier and for introducing the Bill at such a late stage. Tomorrow, it is a Private Members' day. I would like them to see that it is passed today itself, Sir.

SHRIMATI RANUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, I want to thank the hon. Minister for setting our minds at ease because there was a widespread report yesterday regarding this Bill being referred to a Select Committee and there was a meeting convened by all the women's organisations and the National Commission of Women and a Resolution was passed expressing our reservations. Perhaps, my hon. colleague was not here yesterday; so, she is not aware of the development. However, we appreciate that the Government is bringing this Bill in this House and in the Lok Sabha and the Bill will be passed in this very Session. And as regards the Rajya Sabha, certain reservations were expressed. To that, the Resolution of the National Commission of Women can be read, and, Sir, if you would be kind enough to permit me, I could read the Resolution which has been voiced by all the women, cutting across all political parties and different organisations, and the activists who have come forth. If you permit me, I will read it out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please give the substance of it. You need not read the whole Resolution.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Okay, the sum and substance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, only the sum and substance of it.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, the sum and substance of the Resolution is that we have expressed great reservation against this Bill being postponed. So, we will accept the Bill as it is in the Lok Sabha, and as regards the Rajya Sabha and the State Assemblies, whatever technical aspects have to be examined, that may be examined by a competent authority, but there is no point in referring this Bill to a Select Committee. That is the sum and substance of the Resolution that was passed by all the women, nation-wise. And, Sir, I wish to place on record that about this concept of reservation for women many people may express whatever they feel off the record, but on record, cutting across all political parties, I wish to thank the Parliament and all my hon. colleagues for supporting us in this endeavour, ...*(Interruptions)*.... all the men and those who have their wives' permission to say so. We appreciate that they stand up and unanimously support us in this Bill and we look forward to this Bill being passed by tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: And even if it means sitting late hours, it shall be taken up. I would also thank the hon. Minister and I really wish if the Prime Minister had come to this House and given us this assurance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Everybody is promised to take only five minutes.

DR. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI R. (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the resolution...*(Interruptions)*.... We are happy that it is going to be ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let Mr. Jogi say something.

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI (Madhya pradesh): Sir, we are wholeheartedly supporting what our lady Member said, but I would like to request that in the Rajya Sabha, so far, the other down-trodden sections, i.e., the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the Other Backward Classes, have no reservation. When you consider this, this aspect must also be examined.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: That aspect should also be examined. (ends)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thank you.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Sir, I, with an all-party delegation of the National Commission of Women, met the Prime Minister this morning and we have asked that the Bill which is being introduced be passed in the two Houses. He has assured us that he will call a meeting of all the political party leaders today and work out a consensus for passing it in the two Houses, if they are all agreeable. Now the leader of the House has given us an assurance that it will be passed in this Session itself. Sir, there are technicalities about the Upper Houses and, therefore, we have all asked that these be referred to some expert group that can sort them out because of the problem of rotation, but for the Lower Houses, I mean the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, we should pass this Bill in this Session and no kind of delaying tactics be adopted by way of sending it to a Select Committee and the Select Committee coming up with reports;

We are not for it. All manifestoes have made this commitment and the CMP has made the commitment. And we are grateful to you, Sir, that you have given us the time to express our views even during the Question Hour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you....(Interruptions).... Only one of you should speak.

श्रीमती चन्द्रकला पांडेय (पश्चिमी बंगाल): महोदय, मैं आपकी आभारी हूँ कि आपने हम लोगों को बोलने का समय दिया। कल अखबारों में यह देखकर कि यह बिल सिलेक्ट कमेटी में चला जाने वाला है, प्रायः सभी महिला संगठनों ने यहां एक मीटिंग कन्वीन की और हम लोगों ने एक्सस द पार्टी लाइन यह निश्चय किया कि इस बिल को लोक सभा में इसी अवस्था में पास कर दिया जाए। राज्य सभा के लिए अगर कोई टेक्निकल डिफिकल्टी है तो उसके लिए एक प्रवर समिति बनायी जाए और निर्धारण कर लिया जाए। यह कैसे किया जा सकता है हमारे गुजराल जी ने यहां आश्वासन दिया, उसके लिए भी मैं आभारी हूँ। मैं चाहती हूँ कि यह बिल इसी सत्र में पास किया जाए।

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Let the Prime Minister give an assurance. (Interruptions)... Let the Prime Minister give an assurance. (Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shrimati Kamla Sinha. (Interruptions)... I have called her.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA (Bihar): Sir, in this House itself the Prime Minister has categorically assured us that a Bill giving 30% reservation to women will be passed. Since then all the women's organisations have taken up the issue and all of them have met the Prime Minister and he has given an assurance to them also. So, we want that the Government must bring a Bill and pass it in this session itself. As my sisters have stated, if some modalities are to be finalised with regard to reservation in the Upper House, that can be done later. But the main Bill giving 30% reservation to women in the Lower House and in the State Legislatures must be passed in this session itself. (Interruptions)...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Let the Prime Minister give an assurance. (Interruptions)...

DR. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY (West Bengal): Sir, what we want to say is that this Bill must be passed in this session itself. The technicalities regarding the Upper House could be resolved later on. We are also thankful to all the male Members of Parliament for giving us wide

support because it is with the support of men that the women's movement proceed. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes should be given reservation in the Upper House. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Let the hon. Prime Minister give an assurance. *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us pass on to the regular business now. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: There must be reservation for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the Upper House. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: You don't raise it in this forum now. *(Interruptions)*... We don't agree with you. *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jogi, you have made your points. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Let the Prime Minister give an assurance on the floor of the House. *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will ask the Prime Minister *(Interruptions)*... I will ask the Prime Minister. *(Interruptions)*... Mr. Prime Minister, do you want to react to this women's issue?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Sir, with your permission I have been asked by the Prime Minister to assure this House, as I said earlier *(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Why not the Prime Minister?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: If you don't want to listen to me, I will sit down.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA): Respected Sir, I am so happy that at least after 50 years of independence all my sisters are unitedly fighting for their rights. For the first time I have seen this. Forgetting all party directives they have come out and they

want to unitedly fight for their rights after 50 years. Actually Karnataka has initiated this move. *(Interruptions)*... Please hear me. *(Interruptions)*... Please hear me. *(Interruptions)*... Please hear me. *(Interruptions)*... Please hear me. *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, order. *(Interruptions)*... Please, order. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Please hear me. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA (Punjab): It is Mr. Rajiv Gandhi who had initiated the greatest revolution *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Listen to the Prime Minister, please. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Sir, they must accept the truth. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: It may be the idea of Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Impossible. *(Interruptions)*... Please hear me. *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us not interrupt the Prime Minister.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: If you want to give compliments, you give them to yourself. It is a different matter. I must tell the real facts. For the first time a delegation of 100 leaders from various groups from Karnataka under the leadership of one lady Minister, Shrimati Leelavathi P. Prasad came to Delhi and met leaders of all political parties. There are so many leaders here also. They met the leaders and presented a memorandum on which we have taken a decision in Karnataka that 33% reservation should be given to women in the Assembly and in the Lok Sabha.

That decision was taken by us. I myself told them to go and meet the leaders of various political parties because I was not a Member of Lok Sabha or I was not the

person who could decide it. I sent the delegation here. Those people came here and met almost all the party leaders to persuade them. Almost all political parties, if I am correct, have agreed in their manifestos to provide reservation for women. (Interruptions)... I am telling the truth. In the last elections, almost all the political parties in their manifestos agreed to give reservation for women. What I want to mention is this. I must compliment all of you. At least now you all have come together. After 50 years you have realised it. My sisters, Shrimati Margaret Alva and Shrimati Jayanthi Natarajan are fighting with me. I am very happy. The Government is equally anxious. I myself initiated it as Chief Minister of Karnataka. So I am not going to go back on the promise which I made. The Bill is going to be introduced. If everybody agrees, it will be passed in this session.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, I thank the hon. Prime Minister...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I thank the hon. Prime Minister on your behalf.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Request by Kerala for more Power from Central Pool

*561. **SHRI VAYALAR RAVI:** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kerala Government has requested for more share in the power from the Central Pool;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the increase made so far; and

(c) whether there is any proposal for new power plants in that State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) and (b) Gov-

ernment of Kerala had requested the Government of India to increase its share from Central Government's unallocated share of power from 15% to 50% on temporary basis. The share has been increased from 15% to 22% w.e.f. 14.6.1996 till 31.8.1996.

(c) 9 projects are under implementation by KSEB in Kerala. Work on Lower Periyar H.E.P. (3×60 MW) is likely to be completed during 1996-97. KSEB has also signed MOUs with 9 private parties for purchase of power. Kayamkulam TPS (400 MW) in Kerala is being taken up by NTPC.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, Kerala was all along depending on hydro-electric power and we could not go in for thermal power or anything else. Kerala is in a very advanced stage of electrifying almost all the villages. Sir, because of occasional failure of monsoon, we are having acute power shortage in Kerala. The share of power from the Central Pool was only 15 per cent. After the demand it has been increased to 22 per cent for only two months. Kerala has requested for power from the Central Pool. Sir, the nine projects have already been delayed and the MOUs signed with the nine private parties have also been delayed. The naphtha content has not been sanctioned because the naphtha power stations are not good. Considering the non-availability of power from any sector apart from hydro projects, will the Government increase the share of power as demanded by the Kerala Government from 15 per cent to, at least, 30 per cent to avoid the power crisis? Unfortunately, the Minister could not visit Kerala in the last two or three months. There is a regular power-cut in Kerala everyday and every night. That is the real problem which we are facing. It is not because of political reasons. It is because power is not available. Will the Government increase the share of power? Will the Government clear all the agreements which have been signed between the KSEB and the nine private parties, without any further de-