

Sir, Parwanoo is also there at a distance of one kilometre. Chandigarh from Kalka is at a distance of 27 kms. Panchkula is at a distance of 15 kms. and Kharar, which is in Punjab, is at a distance of 40 kms. Sir, it will be shocking to know, if we want to book a call from Kalka to Chandigarh and Panchkula, we have to take the help of the S.T.D. But, on the other hand, if we want to book a call from parwanoo to Shimla, which is at a distance of 85 kms, it is a local call. From Kalka to parwanoo, which is at a distance of only one kilometre, it is on S.T.D. call. The charges are the same as that of a local call. There are no S.T.D. charges. The charge is only one rupee per call. So, I would request the Government to take immediate action so that this entire area is put on the local calls and so that inconvenience to more than ten lakhs of people, who are irritated over this and who are suffering from this irritant daily, do not suffer.

There is another important thing that I want to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister who is sitting here. There is a tape. I rang up Mr. Iqbal Singh, M.P. yesterday. To my irritation, the lady's voice in the tape always kept on repeating, "Check the number, check the number...". I would request that the Department should not use that lady's voice as a tape. If they want to use her services, kindly bring her from Kalka to Delhi. We don't need it there. Send her to her parents or her in-laws, wherever they are. It is very irritating. Sir, I don't know why they are using it. It has been done very recently. I would request the Government to take steps within a week's time. Sir, we are five Members from Haryana. We have one ideology and we belong to one party, that is, the Congress Party. We will wait for action for fifteen days. Otherwise, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, we will sit in *dharna* in front of you after fifteen days. Fifteen days is sufficient time, I know. So, I request that it should be put in order. There is no financial loss also to the Government.

I also want the Government to enquire into the bungling that is there is laying telephone lines in Kalka. Lakhs of rupees have been bungled. I request the hon. Minister to hold an inquiry because the telephone exchange there is always out of order. The people say that some

high officers have committed some mistakes.

**THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI):** Lachhman Singhji, you have made your point very forcefully and I am sure the Government will take note of this and there will be no occasion for you to sit in *dharna* in the House.

**SHRI LACHHMAN SINGH:** Sir, I only want that this should be done. (*Interruptions*)

**THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI):** My only request is that the Government should ensure that this situation of a *dharna* is avoided. The other part of it was that we always get a recorded message. That is the fate of each of us.

**SHRI LACHHMAN SINGH:** Sir, I am the oldest politician in Haryana. I have been in the Assembly for many terms and also as a Minister. I do what I say. Thank you.

**THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI):** There should not arise such a situation. I would request the Minister to take immediate action.

**SHRI LACHHMAN SINGH:** Sir, it is a legitimate demand of mine. There is nothing wrong in it.

**THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI):** The Government will certainly respond to it.

**SHRI LACHHMAN SINGH:** But the officers may not do it. Parwanoo is at a distance of only one kilometre.

**THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI):** No. The Government will take care.

#### **A recent case of dowry death and its implication**

**DR. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY (West Bengal):** Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I wish to raise an issue which seems to have become quite commonplace. I want to specially mention the death of an ordinary woman, one Mrs. Jai Devi, who, according to a report in the "Times of India" published on 22nd July, 1996, was poisoned for inadequate dowry. Sir, none of us is shocked any more. We hear incidents like

this almost everyday, and on everyday news loses its cutting edge, it becomes a hackneyed. But that does not make it any the less sad or socially unjust or it doesn't decrease the gravity of the problem. On the other hand, it increases it.

Sir, I want to say that the ever-increasing problem of dowry makes a mockery of the power of Parliament about which we spend so much time here. It decisively proves that an Act enacted and promulgated by Parliament cannot be enforced unless it has social sanction. In this context, Sir, I wish to ask none but ourselves one or two simple questions. Do we ourselves intervene actively with our family and friends when we hear of dowry related issues? Do we participate in marriages based on dowry?

Is it not time for all Members of Parliament to issue signed statements that they would neither demand nor give dowry?

Sir, I would not take much time of the House because the time at my disposal is very short. I want to say that dowry can be stopped only by a social movement, and this is my point this afternoon, by political will. Through you, Sir, may I appeal to the Members of this House—the message will be conveyed to those who are not present here—to see to it that dowry eradication is included in the political agenda across party lines, just as 33 per cent reservation for women was? Only if we muster political will to generate social will—and social will is a must—that Jai Devis will not be tortured and murdered. Thank you, Sir.

**THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI):** I am sure that you have echoed the feeling and agony of half of the population of this country. This issue has been discussed here many times and all of us should associate with it. ...*(Interruptions)*... The whole House associates ourselves itself with it. This is a very sad situation. I think effective social sanctions and a sustained political will is necessary. ...*(Interruptions)*...

**SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES:** Sir, we all associate ourselves with it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

#### **Harassment of Women News Readers in Doordarshan**

**SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA**  
(Karnataka): Sir, I rise with the same frustration

with which my hon. colleague has just risen in another context. Somehow, we find that the discrimination against women is becoming a part of daily life in whichever area or field that they are working in.

Sir, last week, I had raised in this House the question of cancellation, by the new Government, of the premises which had been allotted to the Indian Women's Press Corps and we had all, across party lines appealed that this should be reviewed—I don't know whether the Government has done it—I hope they will, because I think women, particularly in the media, today require some kind of protection and some kind of support from all sections because they are playing a very important role.

Sir, for the last few days, we are reading about harassment of a woman journalist by the relations of a judge of the lower judiciary and the efforts and attempts by the police in Delhi to hush it up on pressure being brought on them by the judiciary. This woman has spoken very strongly and refused to withdraw the FIR which she has filed.

Sir, added to this, today I am raising the question of what is happening in the Government media, Doordarshan and All India Radio. Sir, these are the mouth-pieces, if I may say so, of the Government, functioning under it. We have had various debates as far as the media is concerned. Over the last few days, there have been reports and articles which are appearing in the Press about the way in which senior women who have given their lives to this Government media are being treated, as if they were just objects which are supposed to be functioning at the will and pleasure of the male-dominated bosses within the organisation. Sir, I am sorry to say that what we always believed that experience and long years of functioning in a particular organisation gives you—for instance, we in Parliament or in every other field—more confidence, more experience and a sense of participation which the new comers, part-time people or contract people, who come and go as a side job or a side effort, cannot give. Sir, is no longer true.

I am sorry, I never believe in mentioning individual names, but we have in Doordarshan news readers who are permanent employees,