

I do welcome the move for appointing a Lok many cases will go on for 15-20 years. Meanwhile, what happens is either the officer retires or gets a promotion. An officer against whom a corruption case is pending gets a promotion. It seems that it is a qualification for getting a promotion. I can cite umpteen cases. I was in the Committee on Public Undertakings. Now I am not in that Committee. In an undertaking, an officer against whom a CBI enquiry was pending was promoted.

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: It is not because... (Interruptions)...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: I have put the question to Shrimati Alva. If you are prepared to answer, I will put the question to you.

Madam, in that case, a suspended officer had been promoted. This is how corruption is being encouraged in the administration. Therefore, the procedure has to be simplified. I hope this Bill will not be another Prevention of Corruption Act. (Interruptions)... A minimum period should be prescribed before which a case should be decided.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Narayanasamy, have you finished your speech? Please conclude. I have other names Shri S.K.T. Ramachandran, Shri Ajit P. K. Jogi, Shri Ram Gopal Yadav and Shri Ish Dutt Yadav will have to speak. So, please conclude.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Therefore, I want to know from the hon. Minister—because she must be having the statistics—in how many cases the trial has been completed and persons convicted. Here I am confining myself to the Central Government cases because the hon. Minister may say that she does not have information relating to the State Governments.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Madam, he is also answering the question.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Because I know how the Ministers answer the questions.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is preparing himself for the future jobs.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Therefore, I want to know whether the Government has any plans to simplify the procedure so that the culprits are booked and immediate action is taken.

Thank you, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I adjourn the House— for lunch till 2.30 P.M.

The House then adjourned at thirty-two minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at thirty-eight minutes past two of the clock, The Vice-chairman (Miss Saroj Khaparde in the Chair

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SARAJ HAPARDE): Now, we shall continue with the Short Duration discussion.

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION— Contd.

**Urgent need for appointing a Lok Pal by enacting a suitable Law in this regard to curb all-pervasive, growing corruption—
Contd.**

श्री राम गोपाल धादवः (उत्तर प्रदेश) : माननीय उपसभापति जी, लोकपाल की व्यवस्था किए जाने की मांग को लेकर जो यह चर्चा चल रही है, इससे पूरी तरह सहमति व्यक्त करते हुए मैं अपनी बात कहना चाहता हूँ। जहाँ तक सार्वजनिक जीवन में भ्रष्टाचार का सवाल है, मुझे कुछ वर्ष पूर्व हिंदुस्तान के एक बहुत बड़े अंग्रेजी न्यूजपेपर में इससे किए गए एक कार्टून की याद आती है जिसमें जब कोई चार्ज की, कर्प्शन की शिकायत करता है अपने बड़े अधिकारी से तो वह कहता है Corrupt he is that I know. But what are the charges against him?

जब इस तरह की धारणा सार्वजनिक जीवन से जुड़े हुए लोगों के बारे में घर करने

वगे लोगों के मन में तो ये स्वाभाविक होता है कि कोई ऐसी रेमेडी हो, कोई ऐसी व्यवस्था हो जो इस पर अंकुश लगाने का काम करे। हालांकि मैं यह जानता हूँ और सब लोग उससे सहमत होंगे कि किसी विधेयक के जरिए, किसी कानूनी व्यवस्था के जरिए समाज से भ्रष्टाचार को दूर नहीं किया जा सकता। जब पूरी सोसायटी में गलत लोगों को सम्मान मिलने लगे, अच्छे और बुरे में भेद करने से लोग घबराने लगे तो जो रैपट करप्शन है, उसको रोकने के लिए चाहे जिस विधेयक को लिया जाए, चाहे जो व्यवस्था की जाए, वह ना काफ़ी होगी और इसके लिए खास तौर से सार्वजनिक जीवन से जुड़े हुए लोगों को और जो बड़े पदों पर बैठे हैं, उनको ऐसा उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करना होगा जिससे उनके पीछे चलन वाले और उनसे जो इन्फ़्लुएंस लेते हैं, उनसे जो प्रेरणा लेते हैं, वे ठीक रास्ते पर चलने का प्रयास करें। शायद इसीलिए बड़े लोगों को प्रेरणा स्रोत हमेशा माना जाता रहा है, उनके जीवन से लोग कुछ सीखते रहे हैं और उसको करने की कोशिश करते रहे हैं। और इसीलिए इस तरह की बातें कही गयीं कि

"The lives of all great men remind us that we can make our lives sublime."

जब-जब इस तरह की बहसें हों, हमारा यह निश्चित मत है कि शिखर पर बैठे हुए लोगों को जनता के सामने अपने को निष्कलंक साबित करने का प्रयास करना है। अगर गंगोत्री साफ नहीं होगी, कानपुर से लेकर इलाहाबाद तक, कानपुर से लेकर कलकत्ता तक गंगा की सफ़ाई करते रहिए, साफ नहीं हो सकती। इसलिए एक चीज़ जिस पर मैं बहुत जोर देना चाहता हूँ, कई बार ऐसा होता है कि व्यक्ति ईमानदार होता है। लेकिन केवल ईमानदार होना ही पर्याप्त नहीं है। अगर वह ईमानदार जनता को न लगे तो ऐसी ईमानदारी भी कोई मतलब की नहीं हो सकती।

We should not only be honest but we should also appear to be honest.

और इसके लिए हमें, और खास तौर से जो सत्ता के शिखर और उसके आस-पास

बैठे हुए लोग हैं, उनको यह साबित करना होगा कि वे न केवल बेदाग हैं बल्कि पूरी व्यवस्था को निष्कलंक और बेदाग रखने की कोशिश भी करना चाहते हैं या उनके मन में इस तरह की इच्छा है। किसी हद तक इस विधेयक से, इस तरह की व्यवस्था से एक काम तो चलता है जैसे उत्तर प्रदेश में लोक आयुक्त है। एक निश्चित प्रोविज़न्स है कि अगर हलफिया बयान देकर कोई चार्ज लगाता है और निश्चित फीस जमा करता है और प्राइमफेसी, जांच करने वाली एजेंसी को ऐसा लगता है कि इसमें कुछ चार्जिज गंभीर हैं और हो सकते हैं, सबस्टेंशियल चार्जिज हो सकते हैं उस पर जांच शुरू हो जाती है। हालांकि इसका दुरुपयोग न हो, इसके लिए इस तरह की भी वहाँ व्यवस्था है कि अगर यह जो आरोप लगाता है, वह व्यक्ति गलत है तो आरोप लगाने वाले के खिलाफ भी क्रिमिनल प्रोसीड्यूस स्टार्ट कर दी जाएगी। तब और केवल तब अनावश्यक चार्जिज लगने बंद होंगे और चाहे जितना बड़ा व्यक्ति, इस लोकपाल की व्यवस्था में, हिन्दुस्तान के प्रधान मंत्री से लेकर मंत्री और बड़े पदों पर, राजनैतिक, खास तौर से सार्वजनिक जीवन से जुड़े हुए जो व्यक्ति हैं। जो अधिकारी हैं उन के खिलाफ तमाम एजेंसियां हैं जांच करने की और उनके द्वारा जांच हो जाती है लेकिन ओ मिनिस्टर्स हैं, या बड़े पदों पर बैठे व्यक्ति हैं उनके खिलाफ जांच होने में दिक्कत होती है। इसलिए आवश्यक है कि इस तरह का विधेयक आये। माम लीजिए जो खूब जांच इनिशिएट करते हैं जिनके आदेश से, हस्ताक्षर से जांच होती है उन्हीं पर जांच करने का सवाल हो तो कौन करेगा। इसके लिए इस तरह की व्यवस्था जरूरी है। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय आपने जो बोलने का अवसर प्रदान किया उसके लिए आपको धन्यवाद देता हूँ और मेहुता जी ने ग्रन्थ रखा है उसका समर्थन करता हूँ।

SHRI S.K.T.
RAMACHANDRAN: (Tamil Nadu):
Thank you, Madam

Vice-Chairman, for providing me an opportunity to take part in the discussion on an important subject, i.e. the urgent need for appointing a Lok Pal by enacting a suitable law in this regard to curb the all-pervasive, growing, corruption.

Of course, corruption is all-pervasive in our country now. It may be a global phenomenon or a universal phenomenon existing and everlasting. But it does not mean that we should allow it to go on like this.

Corruption has not only permeated right down the level, but it has also become—I am ashamed to say this—an accepted way of life now. Corruption is not considered to be a stigma now. How you earn money is not the question now; how much money you have earned is the question.

Today, the intention of each and every one in the country is to make quick money. We are allowing the lotteries because it has become our philosophy. Every State is guilty of this. All the States—whether they are ruled by the Congress, or, by the Opposition—are encouraging various means for making quick money. It has become the culture of the day to consider brief-cases and covers as euphemisms. Madam, briefcases are playing a vital role in the country today. These are, especially, earmarked for politicians. Covers are earmarked for bureaucrats. This is the distinction.

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA (Kar-nataka): What about suitcases?

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN:

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Madam, you should remove those words.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN (Tamil Nadu) Just for fun-sake I said it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): I do not think it is unparliamentary.

SHRI S.K.T. RAMACHANDRAN: It is not unparliamentary, Madam.

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: It is not a question of parliamentary or unparliamentary. It is not in good taste.

SHRI S.K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: I apologise. Interruptions)(..

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: I object to this. It is in very bad taste. I would request my friend to withdraw these words.

SHRI S.K.T. RAMACHANDRAN: I apologise. I withdraw.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Ramachandran, you should not use such words towards your colleague.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Madam, he interrupted me. I said it in a lighted vein.

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: I only supplemented him. I was encouraging. I was not opposing.

SHRI S.K.T. RAMACHANDRAN: Madam, I apologise.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): These words are expunged from the proceedings.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Madam, the Opposition is not there. So, he is inspiring and stimulating me.

Madam, corruption has been institutionalised and officialised. When such an important topic is being discussed in the House, when such an issue has

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

[Shri S.K.T. Ramachandran] been taken up for discussion, I feel Pity that the Opposition has *en masse* run away. So, it reveals their real nature. They do not want to light against corruption. They want to run away with corruption. Some report is on the Table of the House for discussion. It is about some action taken against corrupt fellows. Some culprits have been found out, and the action taken by the Government against them is contained in the report. If the Opposition does not want to discuss it, if the Opposition is reluctant to take part in such a discussion, it means that they want to protect the culprits. Such an Opposition which is protecting the culprits, is trying to exhibit itself, is trying to display itself, is trying to portray itself as the custodian of justice and the custodian of honour. I would like to request the House to send a message to the whole country on how the Opposition is unscrupulous, how it is determined to save the culprits in the country.

Madam, as for the necessity of a Lok Pal, there are no two opinions. Even our Prime Minister, Mr. Natasimha Rao, in July last or in July of 1992, has categorically said that the office of Prime Minister should also be brought under the purview of the Lok Pal Bill. So, we are not objecting to it. We do not want to leave out even the office of Prime Minister. So, when this discussion has been taken up, the Opposition should have taken this opportunity to insist on that and to get a categorical assurance from the Government that it would bring in such a will for cease merit. This shows their inkefarm strude. They think that if such a law is enacted and, in future, if and when they will form a government, they may not have a share in the loot. So, they have this motive of safeguarding themselves.

I am very sorry because I have to speak in their absence. Had they been

here now, I would have been more forceful in my speech.

Corruption should be fought at every level. Constitution of Lok Pal—you call him "Ombudsman" or you call him by any other name—is a must. When we say "corruption", we should not confine it to mean only illicit transactions in money. Corruption, if it is taken in a broader, wider perspective, should include nepotism and favouritism. Here, day in and day out people sit on our head and ask us to make some recommendation to some official or somebody else. If the particular person is fit for promotion or if he is fit for selection, what is the necessity for a recommendation?

When he comes for recommendation the inherent indication there is that he himself is not confident in securing that, he himself is having no faith in himself. So, at the cost of some of the eligible and fit persons, we push somebody who is a misfit or unfit. So, recommendation is also a part of corruption. That is favouritism or nepotism. Most of us would have been victims of this because our society is cast in such a way in the democratic set-up that it is inevitable. You are there to promote the interests of those who are being supported by you and who are supporting you. Under such circumstances if you fail to help them, by any means, the charge is against you. What is the use of my having as my father, what is the use of my having you as my leader, what is the use of my having you as a friend, if you are not helping me to get this or that thing? That is the cry. Even your mother will curse you saying, "You are in a good position and your brothers are rotting. Why don't you help them to get this or that business?" In such a way I stand by my words that corruption has become an accepted way of society. Does it mean that we should tolerate it for ever? Does it mean that we should allow it to drift on like that? The monster, if it

is allowed further and further, will detour the whole nation. Somebody may come and argue: Oh! you show me a country where there is no corruption. I understand it. So long as the body there, itching is there, similarly so long as the nation is there, corruption will be there. At the same time if you allow it to grow further and further, the whole society will be eroded and corroded. Ultimately you could find only the existence of some monster. People, instead of being human beings will be in a jungle of might. There the rule of law will have no effect and the rule of jungle will prevail and the mightier will be at the helm of affairs. So, such things should go immediately. So, cutting across party lines, we should all put our heads together to find a way out of this rut. Of course, this is not the first time when such a discussion has been mooted. Earlier, four times such Bills have been brought to this House or the other House. Sometimes the Bills have been passed in one House and they were allowed to lapse or they lapsed of their own accord. On the dissolution of the Lok Sabha some Bills lapsed. So, attempts were there previously in 1968, 1971, 1985 and 1989 when such Bills were brought in, but the mission was not fulfilled. Abortive attempts were made. Now, we feel the necessity of enactment of an appropriate law without loopholes to plug corruption at any level. So, I would request the Government to take quick steps to immediately frame a Bill and bring it before both the Houses for being passed.

I think the hon. Minister who is holding the charge of Public Grievances is fortunately here. She is a mother. So the mother will heed to prayer of the son. The dire necessity should be understood by the mother and she should try to bring forward a Bill for being passed by Parliament as early as possible. The phrase, "as early as possible" is very vague. So, she can take her own time.

3 P.M.

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Are you pleading as a son?

SHRI S. K. 1. RAMACHANDRAN: its,

SHRI DAVID LEDGER: Very naughty son.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Madam, we should analyse the cause for all these evils. Of course, corruption is a deep rooted evil. What is the cause for that? What is the fundamental cause for that? There is a saying, "Prevention is better than cure." To get rid of a disease is good instead of stopping the ailment temporarily. What is the cause for the deep-rooted evil? From where does it emerge? I think that this evil was there even at the time of the imperialist rule. But after the advent of democracy, it has assumed wider ramifications.

I can boldly say that corruption starts from elections. During the time of elections, if a winning candidate has got conscience, he will never accept that he has been legally elected. The ceiling on election expenses is there. Has any winning candidate or losing candidate strictly adhered to the ceiling of election expenses? If his conscience allows him to speak, he will speak truth. I cannot say whether he can claim himself as a legitimate winner or not. So, this enormous expenditure is the cause of later developments of the evils. It has become a respectable status to say that so and so candidate had spent only Rs. 5 lakhs and the other candidate had spent Rs. 50 lakhs. From where did he get the money? If his conscience allows him to speak, what will he say? So, through corrupt source, he has got the money. In a corrupt way he had spent the money and in a corrupt way he had come to the highest forum. What can we expect from him? So, if corruption is to be stopped or to be minimised mere constitution of a Lok Pal is not enough. At the time of elections, strict enforcement of the law on ceiling on election expenditure should be there. Nobody should be allowed to spend more than the ceiling amount. Not only that, the Government should take hard and strict measures to deal with law breakers at the source of corruption itself.

Then, Madam, we should have a model to constitute such a body. I expected from

our learned Member, Mr. Chimanbhai Mehla that he would throw some light on this matter. But he did not give any suggestion. He has not become a beacon light in that respect. He dealt with the places of corruption and then he stopped. In the United States, they have introduced an Ombudsman system. I suggest to the Government of India for the adoption of the same model here. The United States Act applies to all the three branches—the Judiciary, the Legislature and the Executive and their personnel have disclosure requirements. This covers their income inclusive of gifts and donations beyond a certain minimum, value, assets and liabilities. An effective enforcement machinery is set up to punish the Violators of the Act. The Attorney-General, whose appointment is subject to the Senate's confirmation, is empowered to launch proceedings. The documents are open to public inspection. The Act applies to the President, the Vice-President, the Members of the Cabinet, the Judges of the Supreme Court and the Federal Court, Senators, Congressmen and the officials serving them. In respect of the Judges, section 303 of the Act directs the Judicial Conference of the United States to establish a Judicial Ethics Committee to develop the forms for repairing the information required by them. These things are there. It is a good model. We could follow, that.

If at all, a Lok Pal is constituted, for investigation, it should have a branch. It should have an independent investigation branch. The Lok Pal should be supported by the constitution of an independent investigation machinery. Then only it can have full control over that. If it is again made to depend on the Government or the Executive for investigation, there is room for marring that, spoiling that. With an independent Judiciary—supported by an independent investigation machinery, a high-level Lok Pal is to be constituted as early as possible and for that, the Government should immediately come forward with a Bill without any loopholes and without giving room for any Oppo-

sition to glint any mill. I would request the empty benches to inspire their occupants to come back and marry them quickly and serve the nation usefully. Thank you, Madam.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (कुमारी सरोज खापड़) :

ईश दत्त जी, आपकी पार्टी का समय वैसे देखा जाए तो खत्म हो गया है, लेकिन फिर भी मेरी लिस्ट में आपका नाम है तो मैं चाहूंगी कि आप भी इस पर अपने विचारों को रखें।

श्री ईश दत्त यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) :

मैडम, मैं बहुत आभारी हूँ, आज तो बहुत समय है, मैडम, इसलिए चिन्ता करने की जरूरत नहीं है और मैं पुनः आभार प्रकट कर रहा हूँ कि आपने मुझे समय दिया।

मैडम, श्री चिमन भाई मेहता द्वारा जिस विषय की ओर सदन का और सरकार का ध्यान अल्पकालिक चर्चा में आकर्षित किया जा रहा है, मैं इसका पूरे तरीके से हृदय से समर्थन कर रहा हूँ। मैडम, सर्वव्यापी निरन्तर बढ़ रहे भ्रष्टाचार पर अंकुश लगाने के लिए इस सम्बन्ध में एक उपयुक्त कानून अधिनियमित करने के लिए और लोकपाल की नियुक्ति करने के लिए जो प्रस्ताव है, मैं इस प्रस्ताव का भी समर्थन करता हूँ। मैडम, आज के सार्वजनिक जीवन में भ्रष्टाचार इस देश के लिए एक गंभीर समस्या बन गया है और यह कह करके संतोष कर लेना कि भ्रष्टाचार अंतर्राष्ट्रीय समस्या है मैं समझता हूँ कि यह उचित नहीं है। हमें अपने देश की समस्या पर गंभीरता से विचार करना होगा और भ्रष्टाचार का स्वरूप अब जनता में इस तरह से प्रचारित हो रहा है कि जो उच्च पदों पर बैठे लोग भ्रष्टाचार में लिप्त हैं उसकी परिभाषा अब भ्रष्टाचार में परिवर्तित हो गई है और कहीं-कहीं तो जो भ्रष्टाचार होता है, घूस ली जाती है, इसको अब सुनिश्चिता शुल्क की संज्ञा दी जा रही है। यह गंभीर विषय है, सरकार को इस पर सूचना चाहिए। मुझे आश्चर्य है कि सरकार की इच्छाशक्ति नहीं मालूम पड़ती क्योंकि जब बार बार यह विधेयक लोकपाल की नियुक्ति के लिए आया तो रामचन्द्रन जी भी कह रहे थे। जब बार

बार यह विधेयक आया लोकपाल की नियुक्ति के लिए तो हो सकता है कि किन्हीं कारणों से वह पारित नहीं हो सका हो, लेकिन अब सरकार इस पर क्यों मोत है ? माननीय विधि और धर्म्य मंत्री मैं आपसे अपेक्षा करूंगा, संभवतः इस चर्चा का उत्तर आप ही देंगे, कि आप स्पष्ट रूप से उत्तर में कहेंगे कि सरकार की विवशता क्या है ? आप घोषणा करेंगे कि सरकार लोकपाल की नियुक्ति के लिए क्या कदम उठाने जा रही है और कितनी जल्दी और कितने समय में आप लोकपाल की नियुक्ति करने जा रहे हैं ? अगर इस तरह की घोषणा आप नहीं करते हैं तो मैं ही नहीं पूरा राष्ट्र चिंतित होगा कि सरकार की मंशा इस बारे में साफ नहीं है ।

मैंडम आज अनेक तरह से आरोप लगाते हैं सार्वजनिक जीवन में । मैं किसी को इंगित नहीं करना चाहता, किसी का नाम नहीं लेना चाहता, किसी विभाग के बारे में नहीं कहना चाहता, लेकिन अगर लोकपाल की नियुक्ति होती तो आज ऊंचे पद पर बैठ अफसर या किसी वरिष्ठ मंत्री के खिलाफ कोई आरोप लगता तो यदि लोकपाल उसको निर्दोष साबित कर देता तो जनता के बीच में जो चर्चा होती है या जनता के मत में जो शक है, वह दूर हो जाती । मैंडम रोज इस तरह के प्रकरण उठते हैं । टॉप पर बैठ हुए शीर्षस्थ लोगों के बारे में रोज इस तरह की चर्चा चलती है । मैंडम, कुछ महीनों के अंदर इस सदन में भी चीनी घोटाले की चर्चा हुई । एक मंत्री के खिलाफ आरोप आरोप प्रत्यारोप हुए । उनके विभाग के सचिव ने आरोप लगाया और मंत्री ने सचिव के खिलाफ आरोप लगाए । मैं नहीं कहता कि मंत्री दोषी हैं और मैं यह भी नहीं कहता कि सचिव दोषी हैं । मेरे पास कोई प्रमाण नहीं है, लेकिन अगर लोकपाल की नियुक्ति हुई होती तो कोई एक व्यक्ति लोकपाल के पास आवेदन-पत्र लेकर चला जाता तो जांच हो जाती और वह निर्दोष साबित हो जाता जिससे कि जनता के मन में जो सदेह है, उस सदेह का निराकरण हो जाता । मैंडम, रेल मंत्रालय के हाथ-पावर लोको मोटिव एंजिन की बहुत चर्चा चली । वह अखबार में चली, मीडिया

में आया और लोगों में चर्चा का विषय बनी । अगर लोकपाल होता तो रेल मंत्री अपने आपको निर्दोष साबित करने के लिए अपने एक आदमी से लोकपाल के यहाँ प्रार्थना पत्र दिखा देते । लोकपाल निर्दोष साबित कर देते और देश के सामने उनकी अच्छी छवि आ जाती ।

मैंडम, भ्रष्टाचार नीचे से नहीं चलता । इस भ्रष्टाचार का एक फार्मूला है, एक मैथ-मिटिक्स है, एक साइंस है कि यह टॉप से बॉटम की तरफ चलता है, कभी बॉटम से टॉप की तरफ नहीं गया । इस देश में और दुनिया के किसी हिस्से में ऐसा नहीं होता है । ऐसा कहीं नहीं होता है । मैंडम, मैं किसी के ऊपर आरोप नहीं लगा रहा हूँ लेकिन उदाहरण के लिए कह रहा हूँ कि ऐसा नहीं है कि सचिव पैसे लेने लगेंगे और मंत्री ईमानदार रहेगा । ऐसा नहीं है कि बलक जब पैसा लेने लगता तो उसका अफसर पैसा लेने लगता और जब बड़ा अफसर लेता तो मंत्रीजी पैसा लेने लगेंगे । ऐसा नहीं है बल्कि यह भ्रष्टाचार तो बॉटम टू बॉटम चलता है । इसके बॉटम टू बॉटम जाने का कोई उदाहरण नहीं है, कोई फार्मूला कोई विज्ञान और मैथमेटिक्स नहीं है । इसलिए लोकपाल की नियुक्ति बहुत जरूरी है अभी उत्तर प्रदेश के हमारे मित्र रामगोपाल भी यादव भाषण दे रहे थे । वहाँ लोकपाल की नियुक्ति हुई जहाँ कि कोई भी साधारण आदमी एक हजार रुपये देकर और एक अपच-पत्र देकर अपनी परियद रख सकता है लोकपाल के सामने । फिर जब ऐसे मामले प्रकाश में आते हैं तो उसके ऊपर साक्ष्य होते हैं, निर्णय होते हैं और आदमी बर्दाग और निर्दोष हाबित हो जाता है । मैं चाहता हूँ कि केन्द्र की सरकार भी इस पर गंभीरता से सोचे क्योंकि जनतंत्र है, हमारी जो प्रणाली है, यह दूषित हो रही है और वह दूषित हो रही है भ्रष्टाचार के कारण । मैंडम इनमें कुछ भ्रष्टाचार के मामले सही होते हैं और कुछ गलत भी होते हैं और केवल अफवाह वाले होते हैं तो इस सब के निराकरण के लिए लोकपाल की नियुक्ति होना जरूरी है ।

मैंडम, मैं अपनी बात समाप्त कर रहा हूँ, ज्यादा समय नहीं लूंगा । आज भ्रष्टाचार हमारे सामाजिक जीवन को, राजनैतिक

जीवन को, आर्थिक जीवन को सबको प्रभावित कर रहा है, इसलिए मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करते हुए, हमारे माननीय यह मंत्री, राही जी तो सो रहे हैं, मैं उनको भी बताना चाहता था, मडम, मैं अनुरोध कर रहा था कि सरकार इस विषय को गंभीरता से नज़रों से प्राथमिकता दे और लोकपाल की विधिवित के लिए जल्दी से इस सदन में विधेयक ले आए और इस तरह से अगर सरकार जल्दी से विधेयक ले आती है और उसका अब कानून बनेगा, जो परिभाषा बनेगा, बनेगी उस पर तो बाद में इस सदन में चर्चा होगी, लेकिन मेरी यह मांग है कि उसमें प्रधान मंत्री समेत सारे मंत्रिमंडल के लोगों को और जो जिम्मेदारी के पद पर बैठे हैं, कानून के विशेषज्ञ जैसे राय देंगे, उन सबकी इसकी परिधि में लाया जाए। अतः मैं आपको पुनः धन्यवाद दे रहा हूँ कि मेरी पार्टी का समय तो समाप्त हो चुका था, आपकी कृपा से मुझे बोलने का अवसर मिला है।

इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं किशन भाई सेहत जी के इस सकल्प का बहुत जोरदार ढंग से समर्थन करता हूँ। धन्यवाद।

SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMAN-BHAI PATEL (Gujarat): Madam chairs person, I am happy that you have given me time, to speak on this issue. I agree with Shri Chimanbhai Mehia because, nowadays, we find that corruption, misuse of powers, scams and all sorts of activities—like them are becoming common in all walks of life it is not limited to only the political field or the administrative field, but we find it all-pervading, we find it in every walk of life, in every sphere of life. On the other side, it has become a fashion to speak and criticise corruption—That is also as serious a matter as corruption itself. Everybody is talking about corruption. Even those who talk about corruption are also corrupt They may be talking about it to hide their guilty conscience or— it may happen that, at times, if someone wants to cut somebody to his size. Then the allegations of corruption are made. At times it may happen that for leg-pulling such charges

are made. It is leaked out to the newspapers to fabricate a story. In that way you see that at many places such malpractices are observed. It damages the whole democratic system of our society. It damages the credibility of our institution. It damages the credibility of our Ministers, Parliament, judiciary and bureaucracy also.

The third point I would like to bring to your notice is that due to the all-pervading nature of corruption mafia element; openly come up in the society. They have started taking active interest in politics.

They have been the members of the Legislative Assemblies or such other institutions. There is a talk about the relationship of such mafia elements, smugglers bootleggers, anti-social elements and anti-national elements with the political leaders. There are kidnappers. There are infiltrators. There are traitors. There are terrorists. Many of them are supported by these mafia gangs, maybe, from within the country or from outside the country. There are religious lobbies, communal lobbies and provincial lobbies working and all these lobbies are never sincere about their purpose. In the name of God they work, but they never worry about religion. In the name of a community they want to be the leaders, they want to win the elections, but they never care for the benefit of their community. So, all these elements have come to the surface of the society and they are adversely affecting the democratic process of our country. There are agitations against corruption. May be they are sponsored by some hidden interests or vested interests. There may be real cases also. On the one side, we see all these things are going. On the other side, there are many persons, many leaders, who are genuinely men of character, such persons feel that they should be above doubt. We know that not only Caesar but Caesar's wife also should be above suspicion. In our Gujarati there is a proverb: "Papdi Malti eyal bafay."

It may be a good stuff. But if there is one germ of corruption inside that stuff, it can't damage the whole group or the whole community or the whole field. At times it also happens that to create disorder some vested interests or some foreign agencies also support the antisocial activities of the agitators and the honest persons become prey to this. So, looking into all these circumstances, the Lok Ayukta institution should be there and the Congress Party should bring in a legislation to install that institution as quickly as possible.

The Opposition every now and then shouts about corrupt ways of the ruling party. They have their own motives behind it. I would say that they are never serious about the removal of corruption but they want to catch the eyes of the voters through their ways and means. They want to have cheap popularity. They never try to mend their line of character but they want to change the line of character of other people.

On that basis they want to have popularity and they want to win elections. So, when all the forces are working for their own interests to strengthen themselves and to maintain their self-interest, I think the institution of Lok Ayukta is the necessity of the times. The party should bring in this legislation to form this institution. Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): Madam Vice-Chairman, the initiator of the discussion, Shri Chimanbhai Mehta is missing. We hoped that the discussion on the Lok Pal would really prove to be a comprehensive discussion. There had been a demand from our friends on the other side essentially for a discussion on the issue of the appointment of a Lok Pal for the country. We had accepted it. But, as I said, unfortunately, they are missing and even the Member who initiated the discussion is not here. It is a known fact that five

attempts have been made up till now—

Mr. Chimanbhai Mehta has come to get the Lok Pal institution established in this country. But, somehow the proposal was jinxed because each time it was brought in, either the Government collapsed or the Lok Shaba, was dissolved and each time the Bill lapsed. This time also they have walked out of the discussion itself. In order to briefly explain the background, it can be mentioned that the Lokpal Bill has had a chequered history, going back to 1968, when the Lok Pal and the Lok Ayukta Bill, 1968 was introduced in the Fourth Lok Sabha. This Bill was based on the recommendation of the Administrative Reforms Commission made in 1966 suggesting the setting up of an institution at the Central and the State level to look into the complaints, from persons who have been victimised by maladministration and corruption. However, that Bill as well as the four other subsequent Bills on the same subject in 1971, 1977, 1985 and 1989 could not be enacted for one reason or the other. In 1989, the then Government had proposed that the Lok Pal should be a three member body and not a one-man institution. We have seen the problems of the other institutions which have been made multi-member. May be this requires "to be looked into once again in the light of our experience of multi member institutions. To enable the members constituting the Lok Pal to perform their functions without fear or favour from anyone and to maintain its independent statute, the Bill provided for the appointment and removal of the Chairman and members of the Lok Pal in a manner analogous to the appointment and removal of the Chief Justice and other judges of the Supreme Court of India. Further, it was proposed that the Chairman and members of the Lok Pal be appointed only from among the sitting and retired judges of the Supreme Court of India and the expenditure on the institution of the Lok Pal be treated as charged expenditure on the Consolidated Fund of India. While introducing this Bill, the then Government also indicated that the aim

of the Bill was to ensure purity at higher political levels. The then Government had introduced this Bill in December, 1990. But, they did not process it further. It can also be mentioned that a similar attempt made by the non-Congress Government in 1977 did not proceed further during their terms of office. As far as this Government is concerned, we have already informed the Rajya Sabha on more than one occasion that the matter is receiving our attention. The fact that this subject has been discussed by the Joint Select Committees of Parliament and the fact that over the last 26 years these unsuccessful attempts have been made, will certainly enable us to find a way by which a consensus can be worked out, as the Prime Minister himself had assured the House, we are committed to having a Lok Pal Bill brought before the House... (Interruptions).

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:

But when? That is my point on which I would like you to throw light,

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Mr. Mehta, that is why I am saying this. We were hoping that everybody would be in the House today, that there would be a kind of sharing of experiences and opinions and that some consensus as a result of the discussion would emerge. It has again literally become an onesided discussion... (Interruptions) Let me just finish. All I am saying is that our past experience has been that of bringing Bills and not being able to pass them because no consensus or no kind of acceptance of the proposals could be achieved. The Prime Minister also has said in this House that We were prepared to have an open debate. He has said, "Come with all the suggestions which are acceptable to all of us and let us create an institution which would really be beyond any controversy." It is not a question of the Congress or the Opposition. It is not a party issue. It is not a political issue.

It is a question of creating an institution which can give the confidence not only to those whom it is supposed to deal with, but also to the people at large that here is an institution which is beyond any controversy and which is acceptable to everybody. As I said, we are also interested and the Prime Minister has assured the House and he is on record having said in this House, "I am also prepared to consider bringing the Prime Minister within the purview of the Lok Pal." So, it is not that we are afraid of anything. In fact, in two of the earlier Bills, the Prime Minister was sought to be brought within the purview of the Lok Pal. But then again, there was no consensus and nothing went through. Madam, it is right, and the Members, particularly, Mr. Ramachandran, have spoken about this, that as regards the political system and the way we function with the electoral processes, namely, funds for the political parties and for elections and so on, there are certain inherent problems in the system which the people look at differently. Those who fight elections may look at it from one point of view and the public may look at it from another point of view. Therefore, condemning the whole system and just keeping on saying that everything is corrupt, that everything is going the wrong way, I think, is to destroy the faith of the people in the system itself. They are all human institutions run by human beings and there may at times be problems, there may be shortcomings and there may be various ways in which they can be strengthened and improved. I do admit that there is need for a national consensus on this issue. I would also say that we are a country in a developmental process where there are shortages. For instance, to get a telephone connection out of the pending lists, the people will queue up outside the Ministers' offices or down the line somewhere and then be prepared to pay in order to get it out of turn. There are people who are prepared to pay to break the queue even for admissions into schools, colleges and universities. Today, the people are prepared

to pay donations. They are prepared to do anything. Therefore, the question of what is done, by whom, at what level, is something which we need to look at. It is easy to condemn every political person and say that the politicians are corrupt. I think we do ourselves injustice by repeatedly saying that the political system is corrupt and that the politicians are corrupt. There are people who pay, who corrupt the system and who get away with it simply because there is no evidence and there is no proof. This wild kind of allegation very often used—the Press is also used in this game—just to create an impression, that corruption is taking place, is something which I think does not do all of us very much good. But at the same time we are committed to cleaning the system, working out an institution in which this evil can really be dealt with.

Madam, I would also like to place a few facts before the House, maybe just to remove any impression that nothing is happening or nothing is possible within the existing institutions to deal with the problem, of corruption. We have legislations. We have Section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure under which there is a provision for complaints and for dealing with cases of corruption. We have the Prevention of Corruption Act which was totally overhauled by our Government in 1988 and the sections of which have been, made very stringent covering a wide range of offences. We have the Commissions of Enquiry Act, 1952.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: The Anti-Corruption Act does not, (interruptions) . . . Madam, I will speak if only you give me permission. The Anti-Corruption Act is there. But there is a provision that no government servant or Minister can be prosecuted before a court of law unless the appropriate Ministry gives its sanction. But such sanction has never been given and no Minister in the last 47 years was ever tried because! this protection is there under the anti-corruption Act. This is how possible perceive this.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Let the Minister answer.

SHRI MADAN BHATIA (Nominated): Madam, I want to say something.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: If he wants to intervene, let him intervene.

SHRI MADAN BHATIA: Madam Vice-chairman, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to intervene. I must make it dear to the hon. Member that the Lok Pal which he is contemplating also does not and will not have jurisdiction to carry out criminal prosecution.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: I have not spelt it out, I have not spelt out what the concept should be. How can I do this unless a Bill is brought before the House?

SHRI MADAN BHATIA: What he is saying is that under the Commissions of Enquiry Act, there can be no prosecution. No Bill which has so far been contemplated by any Government since 1960 including the 1989 Bill, contemplated giving power to the Lok Pal to carry out prosecution and conviction. This has not been done anywhere in the world. Even in Sweden where this system took its origin by the name of Ombudsman, such a power of prosecution has not been given. The power of prosecution and conviction, everywhere in the world, vests in the courts and cannot be delegated or passed on to any other institution, including the Lok Pal. The institution of Lok Pal will only be another equivalent of the Commission of Enquiry. . . (Interruptions).. Madam, may I take one more minute?

I want to make it clear that it is not so easy to say that the Lok Pal will solve every problem relating to corruption. On the contrary, the Lok Pal which was contemplated by the 1989 Bill and some of the earlier suggestions can completely derail democracy in the country. The Lok Pal Bill which was contemplated in 1989 sought to cover even the Prime Minister.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS, SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Bhatia, just a minute. (Interruptions)..

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: The President is also covered.

SHRI MADAN BHATIA: Now, any person can come up and file a complaint against the Prime Minister before the Lok Pal and the Prime Minister becomes a lame-duck Prime Minister. One single person holding the office of the Lok Pal can entirely derail democracy and even, in fact, override the parliamentary supremacy to which the Prime Minister of the country is subject. It is a very serious matter.. (Interruptions).. Madam, I am concluding my intervention. It is such a serious matter that it cannot be taken up by the Government off-hand and this Bill can be brought before the Parliament and got passed. It is a very serious matter. Therefore, it requires a national debate and a national consensus.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Madam, this is exactly what I was coming to because it has been suggested in the course of discussions as to why a Lok Pal would be able to help us in one way or the other. But I must point out that, as the honourable Member has, that if it could cause more delays and, in fact, cause a parallel system to function rather than to make things move quicker. It is an institution which will look into complaints and will then say, whether you must proceed further or not. The normal courts and the normal legal system will then come into operation and you will have to go by the law of the land; one cannot just say because the Lok Pal has said something or somebody else has said something, the man is condemned. You have got to go then through the process of the regular prosecution or other processes. Therefore, as Shri Madan Bhatia also pointed out, you cannot create a legal system parallel to the courts that exist at the moment. This will have to fit into this system and, therefore, we are

really looking at the whole institution of Lok Pal as one which could in a way, help improve things rather than cause more delays. As I said, the omissions of Inquiry Act is there and then you have the Central Vigilance Commission and the Central Bureau of Investigation—one is investigative and the other gives advice to the administration and the Government.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Then, why not a single Minister was tried in the last.. (Interruption) ..

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA:

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do not want to go into the details but there have been.. (Interruption)..

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: No, I wanted Shri Madan Bhatia to answer that question and that was not answered. No Minister can be prosecuted..

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Mehta, let the Minister reply first and whatever queries are there you can then ask.

SHRI MADAN BHATIA: Let the hon. Member name any particular Minister whose prosecution was sought for under Section 117 and the permission was refused. Let him, in fact, enlighten the hon. Members.. (Interruption) ..

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Let the Minister answer first. My request to the hon. Members will be 'Let the Minister reply and then whatever observations you have to make, please make after that'.

SHRI MADAN BHATIA: Madam, he named me, that is why..

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Madam, permission is sought for where an appointment is made by a particular authority. For instance, in the case of Government servants, you have to get the permission of that authority before you can prosecute an officer. I can give you any number of examples. Madam, since this question has been raised, I can give you the figures of the CBI itself,

In 1993, the total number of cases registered were 1,282, out of which the number of Government servants, that were involved, was 899. The number of traps that were laid was 222. As for the cases sent for trial, the number is 595 which means that permission has been granted for them to be taken up in the courts. Then, the total number of cases disposed of in the course of the year is 286 out of which the number of convictions is 183, the number of acquittals is 85 and the number of cases otherwise disposed of is 18. I have got the entire break-up and, therefore, it is not true to say that permission is never granted. These figures by themselves show. . (Interruption)..

So, Madam, I do not want here to go into more details but even at the moment there are matters in courts where permission has been given either by Governors or by others by which prosecution against political people has been initiated or had earlier been initiated.

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI (Madhya Pradesh): So, even Ministers have been convicted, Madam.

SHRI CHITMANBHAI MEHTA: Yes, after they ceased to be Ministers. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: No, while in office. (Interruption)..

SHRI MADAN BHATIA: Can I add? I have the permission of the hon. Minister to add.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Have you got the permission of the Chair?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Bhatia, you have to take the permission of the Chair.

SHRI MADAN BHATIA: Madam, you have given me the permission. I want to make it clear that this question arose in the case of a former Chief Minister, whom I need not name, in 1981. The permission to prosecute him was so tight from the Governor. The Governor refused the permission in the first instance. The matter went up to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court felt that the question whether the permission was to be granted or not to be granted was a justiciable matter and on that basis the Governor granted the permission to prosecute a former Chief Minister and he faced the prosecution for a period of almost one decade and ultimately he was acquitted. I am giving the example of a Chief Minister, not a Minister.

SHRI CHITMANBHAI MEHTA: During his Chief Ministership? What is the position?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE) Mr. Mehta, I hope, you will give a chance to the Minister to reply.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: There are a couple of other points which I would quickly make Madam, and one is about bringing the Prime Minister under the purview of the Lok Pal. There are very vital issues in, this which involve a person who is going to be appointed. The person is going to be appointed by the executive. That person is going to investigate the head of the executive who appointed him. So, there are going to be very technical problems as well as problems of propriety. Besides that, I must say, the dignity attached to the office of the head of the Government of the country is involved. The Prime Minister, is there. He really cannot be brought into disrepute everyday in one chamber or the other for political purposes or otherwise and therefore, this issue has to be looked at from a much, if I may say so, different angle altogether where the prestige and the status of a country and the head of its Government are involved. There are other controls on public servants. There are forms in which, for instance, every official who joins the government, gives a statement of his assets and every year, every transaction has to be reported to the controlling authority. So is the case with the Ministers. When we become Ministers, we have to file our statements of assets and liabilities to

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tub prime Minister and every Year by the 31st of March, we are supposed to update them and give the latest position to the Prime Minister. It is the code of conduct which I think, is even more important than just a law.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:
Am I permitted to see the statement?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA:
Madam, the question is under the code of conduct. We give it to the Prime Minister. If you have any doubt about any Minister, you can write to the Prime Minister.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Mehta, you yourself were a Minister, once upon a time. How can you forget all these things?? You have to inform the Prime Minister whatever the assets and liabilities are there and you cannot raise this kind of an issue.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA:
One or two more small things, Madam which I would like to add, Madam, there are 12 States which have created Lokayuktas, six of them have included the Chief Ministers within their purview and six have not. The first State which had got the Chief Minister brought under the purview of the Lokayukta was Orissa, and I must say that the only State which abolished the office of Lokayukta by Ordinance was also Orissa, which means that somewhere along the line they discovered that the Chief Minister was not quite comfortable with the procedure and they got it abolished by an Ordinance, therefore, just to say that the Congress governments are afraid and that the other governments are doing it all right, is not quite correct. I am not casting any aspersions on anybody. But the experience has been that even in those States, as they go along, they find that they run into problems with the functioning of the Lokayukta or with their own functioning and they have to resort to

Ordinances to abolish the institution itself. Therefore, I would only like to say that there have been plus and minus points in the experiences which, I think, we have all got to keep in mind before we finally take a decision on this.

In conclusion, I would like to say that, as the Prime Minister has himself said in this House, we are open to suggestions. The Prime Minister has asked for an open national debate on this issue. He would like to take into confidence all the political parties and the leaders, if they are prepared to sit with us at the table together and come to a consensus. And having consulted everybody, the Government which has an open mind is prepared and is willing and is even more committed to coming forward with a comprehensive Bill which can find, maybe, a concrete solution to the whole problem of corruption in the country. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): I think the Members are satisfied with the reply of the Minister. But if you have any clarification...

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: I am satisfied in a way because the hon. Minister has agreed that there is a need to enact a Lok Pal Bill and for that a consensus is required. I do understand and appreciate your viewpoint. But, kindly fix some time-frame to bring about the consensus because that is the urgency. Therefore, you may write letters to the Opposition leaders. If they do not reply to you, then they are to be blamed. But, at least, for the consensus and for the discussion, you fix some date, not at the moment but within a fortnight, within a month. You may take your own time. But this is how, I think, you may clinch the issue. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Thank you. We shall now take up the Government

Motion. Shri Sangh Priya Gautam has to continue. But he is not present in the House. He is absent and his whole Party is absent. Therefore, I would call Mr. Ajit Jogi.

GOVERNMENT MOTION ON THE TWENTY-EIGHTH AND TWENTY-NINTH REPORTS OF THE FORMER COMMISSIONER FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES —Contd.

श्री अजीत जोगी : (मध्य प्रदेश) : उप-सभाध्यक्ष जी, राष्ट्र गौरव कविवर रवीन्द्र नाथ टैगोर ने जुलाई 1910 में "अपमानित" शीर्षक की एक कविता लिखी थी जो उनके संकलन, जिस पर उनको नोबल पुरस्कार भी मिला, "गीतांजलि" में है। मैं अपनी बात उस कविता की चार पंक्तियों से प्रारम्भ करना चाहता हूँ :

"हे, भ्रमार दुर्भाग्य देश, जदिर,, करेछो अपमान
अपमाने होते होष, तहादेर अमान
आरे तुमि निचे फेलो, से तोमारे बांधिबे जो नीचे,
पश्चात देखोछे आरे, से तोमारे पश्चाते टानिबे,

यह एक आवाहन है जो मविष्य-दृष्टा रवीन्द्र नाथ टैगोर ने वर्ष 1910 में भारत में समाज के उन लोगों से किया था जो आज भी समाज में दूसरों की अपेक्षा घागे हैं। इसका हिन्दी अनुवाद इस तरह है :

"तुमने जिसका अपमान किया है, स्वयं अपमानित होकर तुम्हें उन सभी के समान होना होगा। जिसे तुम नीचे फेंकते रहे हो वह तुम्हें नीचे बांध रखेगा। जिसे तुमने अब तक पीछे रखा है, वह तुम्हें पीछे खींच रहा है"।

समाज में जिसको लोग पीछे रखते हैं, पिछड़ा रखते हैं दबाकर रखते हैं, शोषित रखते हैं जिसके साथ अन्याय और अत्याचार करते हैं उसके कारण ही पूरा समाज पीछे रह जाता है। यह जो आवाहन कविवर रवीन्द्र नाथ टैगोर का है इससे मैंने अपनी बात यही रेखांकित करने के लिए प्रारम्भ की है। जब मैं खर्चा प्रारम्भ कर रहा हूँ अनुसूचित जाति और अनुसूचित जनजाति आयुक्त की 28वीं और

29वीं रिपोर्ट पर तो मैं कांग्रेस पार्टी की ओर से प्रथम वक्ता के रूप में अपनी बात कर रहा हूँ। मैंने यह बात रेखांकित करके इसलिए कही क्योंकि हमारी पार्टी का बीरज आली इतिहास रहा है इन वर्गों के लिए संघर्ष करने का, इन वर्गों के संरक्षण का, इन वर्गों के संवर्धन का।

इन वर्गों की उन्नति का, इन वर्गों के विकास की, इन वर्गों की प्रगति की; हमारी प्रतिबद्धता सदैव रही है। यह प्रतिबद्धता जब से हम सरकार में आये हैं तब से ही नहीं है, पर यह तब से है जब हम जंग-ए-आजादी लड़ रहे थे, जब हम स्वतंत्रता का संग्राम लड़ रहे थे। बापू ने, महात्मा गांधी ने, राष्ट्रपिता ने जब स्वतंत्रता की लड़ाई लड़ी तो एक बार नहीं, बार-बार यह बात कही, उन्होंने बार-बार इस बात को ओर देकर कहा कि राजनीतिक आजादी का कोई महत्व नहीं है, जब तक भारत में सामाजिक आजादी नहीं आयेगी तब तक राजनीतिक आजादी कोई अर्थ नहीं रखती। उनका एक वाक्य हम बार-बार कोट करते हैं "यंग इंडिया" के वोल्यूम 3 में जो बात उन्होंने कही थी जिसे हम बार-बार कहते हैं, तब उन्होंने आजादी के सर्वभ में यह कहा था :

"The British might go, but freedom would not come without complete removal of the blot of untouchability."

उनके लिए अंग्रेजों का इस देश से जाना कोई बहुत महत्वपूर्ण बात नहीं थी, उनके लिए महत्व इस बात का था कि इस समाज में जो कुरीतियाँ हैं, इस समाज में जो भेदभाव है, इस समाज में जो अन्याय है, इस समाज में जो जोर जुल्म और ज्यादती है, इस समाज में जो शोषण है, दमन है, वह जब जाएगा तभी राजनीतिक आजादी का महत्व होगा। यह कांग्रेस की प्रतिबद्धता जंग-ए-आजादी के समय, से, स्वतंत्रता संग्राम के समय से रही है। इसीलिए हम कांग्रेस के लोग बड़े गौरव से कह सकते हैं मुझे अच्छा नहीं लग रहा है कि हमारे प्रतिपक्ष के सदस्य यहाँ नहीं हैं, नहीं तो मैं यह बात उनकी ओर ही मुखानिब होकर कहना चाहता था कि हम