

you I would like to draw the attention of the Government that the Government has now changed and it is time that the region of Kutch is not further deprived.

Inhuman treatment meted out to the children of prostitutes

SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI (Gujarat): Madam Deputy Chairman, through you I would like to draw the attention of the Government to an issue which is extremely sensitive, tragic and pathetic. Yesterday and last week we discussed at length and rightly so the issue of atrocities created on Harijans, backward classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. There exists a section of the society. Lot of atrocities are subjected to this particular section of the society, not only to this particular section of the society but even to their children. This section of the society I am referring to existed all the time in history in some form or the other. I understand that in a part of Bengal a part of the society, when they create the image of Ma Durga during the Durga Puja festival, the earth, mud, comes from this particular section of the society, I am referring to. This section of the society is also termed by save as the safety valve of the society. Yes, Madam, the section of the society I am referring to is the prostitutes, the atrocities created on children of prostitutes. It was a very sad commentary on us all when I saw a portion of the 'Current', that is the issue of May 1990 of Newstrack cassette in which it is shown that the children of the prostitutes are taken away forcibly by the police under an Act known as Juvenile Justice Act of 1986. Madam, I would want the Government to watch this cassette and find out for themselves as to what kind of injustice these minor children are subjected to. These children are forcibly suddenly taken away from their mothers. Yes, their mothers could be prostitutes, but so what, a mother is a mother after all and Madam Deputy Chairman, who would know this fact better than you

because I am sure a women knows this best. It was shown on this particular cassette that the police people suddenly go and raid the house and seize children whether they are the children of the prostitutes or children of the neighbour. This is in an area called the G.B. Road. I was told on further enquiry that children who are not even connected to the prostitutes, they just happen to live there, they are also taken away and put in an agonising condition for several days before they were released. Madam, I want to cut the matter short because I do not have much time. I am appealing to the Government that the Juvenile Justice Act of 1986 be reviewed, let there be a committee to review the situation. Because, when they took away these children. it was found that these children were school-going children, they were studying and they were being looked after properly. I can fully appreciate the motive of the Government and the law that they do not want to encourage the children to get into this profession but, Madam, there are ways and means. It is very important that whenever such a situation arises we must take the help of social service organizations who understand human relationships perhaps better than the Act itself which is only on paper. Not only that, Madam.

I was quite touched when I saw this cassette wherein a young lady was being interviewed and who was kept in one of these "Observation Homes." It was said that she was going to get married the next day. When she was asked, "Do you know the name of your would-be husband?", she said "No." I am not quite sure if this is the best solution.

[Shri Dineshbhai Trivedi]

because a lady who does not even know the name of her would-be husband, and I do not hesitate to say that there are chances of the same lady, who might not have been a prostitute, being forced into that profession by the society.

Thank you, Madam.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (Karnataka): Madam, may I just say that perhaps there is a little mistake because, under the amended Immoral Traffic Prevention Act—we ourselves amended the law last year—there is a special provision that any minor found on the premises where prostitution is being carried on is presumed to have been brought there for prostitution, and the law automatically comes into operation? I am talking not of the Juvenile Justice Act but of the amended Immoral Traffic Prevention Act in order to prevent children from being automatically forced into prostitution by being kept on the premises where prostitution is carried on. Therefore, it is under that Act that these raids take place sometimes to prevent children from automatically being pushed into the profession. I just wanted to clarify that they are two different Acts.

SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI: Madam, I have no doubt about the motive of the Government. All I am trying to submit is that nobody on earth has a right to take away the children if the children are given proper education. I do not know which law permits children to be snatched away from their mothers—and I was further told that prostitutes are not even recognized as mothers.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Pasumpon Thai. Kiruttina...Not here. Shrimati Margaret Alva.

Shifting of Control of Department of Women and Child Development

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (Karnataka): Madam, I rise to mention here a matter which has caused

serious concern to many of us in the women's movement in this country. Madam, it was even before the International Women's Year that the National Commission on the Status of Women was set up, which gave a very detailed report on corrective actions that were called for to improve the status of women in this country. The year 1975 was the International Women's Year, and also the decade which followed was the International Women's Decade. At the Nairobi International Movement in 1985, the United Nation accepted the forward looking strategies for women and the thrust of the entire decade was equality, development and peace. The whole concept was that women should be made part and parcel of the developmental processes within their communities and in their countries. We have, as a nation—and Parliament also has—adopted the National Plan of Action for Women. It is not the document of any particular party or any particular Government, but Parliament itself has endorsed the National Plan of Action. Therefore, I feel that the concept of removing women from the traditional idea of welfare programmes to strategies to involve them in mainstream developmental processes in their countries has come to be accepted by the International Movement, by the United Nations and also by our country as part of our accepted national strategy. I am, therefore, concerned I would say, even dismayed, and I am expressing the feelings of women outside this House as well as in other parties. Even within the House I have talked to a number of women who feel the same way that the moving of the Department of Women and Child Development to the Ministry of Welfare without consultations with anybody is a very unfortunate and retrograde step. The Department of Women and Child Development was a part of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. We were proud and happy that at last this country and the decision-makers had begun to accept women as human resource and as a resource capable of development. It looks like