

Abolition of prostitution

736. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prostitution has been abolished all over the country;

(b) if not, what are the names of the States where the profession of prostitution is regulated by law;

(c) what is the number of prosecutions made during the last three years for illegal traffic in women;

(d) whether Government are aware that in States where prostitution has been abolished, brothels have been restyled as art academies; and

(e) if so, what steps Government are taking to fight this evil of prostitution under cover?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARA-NAND): (a) and (b). The suppression of immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 has been in force throughout the country except the State of Sikkim. The following are the broad categories of offences dealt with under the Act: —

(i) profiting by the prostitution of another person;

(ii) exploiting another person for prostitution;

(iii) soliciting in a public place etc. Further, the Act empowers competent authorities of the State

Governments to notify public places of other areas where prostitution shall be punishable.

(c) According to the figures available, the total number of cases reported under the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 were 14,708, 16,150 and 13,924 during the years 1975, 1976 and 1977 respectively.

(d) Under Section 3 of the Act, the keeping of brothels has specifically been made punishable. However, the possibility that brothels may be run in some places in a clandestine or camouflaged form, cannot be ruled out.

(e) The enforcement of the law in this behalf is the responsibility of the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. The 1956 Act has been amended in 1978 with a view to removing the difficulties and lacunae experienced by implementing agencies. The Government of India also assists voluntary organisations to undertake measures against prostitution by establishment of Short Stay Homes. This Act also provides for setting up of protective homes, and corrective institutions for the care, protection, training and rehabilitation of women and girls rescued from the vice of prostitution.

Out-of-turn allotment to Press correspondents

737. SHRIMATI PRATTBHA SINGH: Will the Minister of