

Eradication of untouchability in the country

316. SHRI PANDURANG DHARMAJI JADHAV: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps the Central Government have so far taken to eradicate untouchability in the country;

(b) what are the schemes which are being implemented in the country for eradication of untouchability;

(c) whether there is any State in which untouchability in any form has been eradicated; and

(d) what machinery Government are employing at present to eradicate completely untouchability in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI DHANIK LAL MANDAL):

(a) to (d) A detailed report was laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on 20th and 21st September, 1978 respectively containing the measures taken by the Central Government and the State Governments for the abolition of untouchability and for the implementation of the provisions of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 for the period ending 31st December, 1977. This is a mandatory report to be laid on the Table of each House of Parliament by the Central Government every year under Section 15A(4) of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.

The material for the said report for the period ending 31st December, 1978 is being collected from the State Governments and the report in this regard will be placed on the Table of both Houses of Parliament, as soon as possible.

A comprehensive Action Plan for the eradication of untouchability is

also being finalised in consultation with the State Governments and the concerned Central Ministries.

Marriages between Scheduled Castes and Caste Hindus for eradication of untouchability in the country

317. SHRI PANDURANG DHARMAJI JADHAV: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to arrange marriages between the Scheduled Castes and Caste Hindus in order to eradicating untouchability in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI DHANIK LAL MANDAL): (a) to (c) The Working Group which was set up by the Government of India in December, 1977 for the formulation of strategy and programme priorities for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes during the Medium Term Plan, 1978—83, in its report submitted in August, 1978 has, among other things, expressed the view that the policy of reservation should reflect the perspective towards a casteless society and that therefore certain facilities in employment should be given to those who inter-marry, one of the spouses being a member of a Scheduled Caste, and to their children. For this purpose, the Working Group recommended that:—

(i) The children of marriages where one of the spouses belongs to a Scheduled Caste should be entitled to the same benefits of reservation as provided for the Scheduled Castes;

(ii) Where one of the spouses of a marriage belongs to a Scheduled Caste, each spouse may be given the