Increase in retirement age of judges

1638. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is giving priority to move the Bill enhancing the retirement age of High Court judges from 62 to 65 on the basis of Parliamentary Standing Committee's report to benefit the Judges on the verge of retirement as per the present constitutional provision; and

(b) if so, how many judges would be benefited and the pending vacancies in High Courts will not further hurt the disposal of cases by enforcement of increase in age of retirement?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b) The Constitution (One Hundred and Fourteenth Amendment) Bill, 2010 which provides for increasing the retirement age of Judges of High Courts from 62 to 65 years was taken up for discussion in the Lok Sabha on 28.12.2011. However, the discussion has remained inconclusive due to adjournment of the Winter Session. The Bill would bring the retirement age of High Court Judges at par with that of the Supreme Court Judges.

This will benefit the High Court Judges who will be in position when the decision is announced and made effective. At the same time, it will address the issue of vacancies and help in disposal of pending cases to an extent.

Cases of crime against women

1639. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of crime against women filed in various courts of the country during the last two years and the current year;

(b) the number of cases in which decisions have been pronounced by the courts and the number of cases still pending;

(c) whether the Government is considering to set up separate special fast track courts to deal with crime against women;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e)   if not, the legal reforms contemplated, if any, by Government to deal with the increasing number of cases of crimes against women?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (e) As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, a total of 203804, 213585 and 228650 cases of crime against women were registered during the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively. The disposal and pendency of court cases on crime against women fall within the domain of judiciary. No separate data on the subject is available nor is being maintained by Government.

Police and Public Order being State subjects under the Constitution, primary responsibility of prevention, detection, registration, investigation and prosecution of crimes, including the crimes against women, lies with the State Governments/UT administrations. The Government of India has been advising them from time to time to give special attention to crimes against women. Ministry of Women and Child Development in Government of India has issued a detailed advisory dated 4th September, 2009 to all State Governments/UT Administrations which *inter-alia* includes setting up of Fast Track Courts.

Besides continuous efforts to bring down the pendency of cases, Government has enacted a number of legislations for the protection of women. The review of these laws is carried out from time to time for amendments to improve their effectiveness as well as to bring about new legislations, whenever required. The protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act was enacted in 2005. A Bill for Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 7th December, 2010. Further, amendments in the Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr PC) were carried out in the years 2005 and 2008 to strengthen the law for prevention of crime against women and to safeguard the interest of women.

Regulation of legal education

1640. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a)   whether Government has decided to replace the Bar Council of India (BCD) with a full time panel of experts and academicians under the National Council for Higher Education and Research and minimize BCI's role in regulating legal education;