

**RE. EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, matters to be raised with the permission of the hon. Chairman. ...*(Interruptions)*... Now, Zero Hour submissions. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH (Tamil Nadu): Sir, before going to Zero Hour submissions, at least give a few minutes so that all the women Members can speak. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री नरेश अग्रवाल (उत्तर प्रदेश): सर, यह allow कर दिया जाए। ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let me first speak. ...*(Interruptions)*... Agreed. ...*(Interruptions)*... I heard you. ...*(Interruptions)*... Hon. Chairman has permitted the Zero Hour notices of all women Members and put it first. Therefore, those who have given notice today should be called. ...*(Interruptions)*... No, they should not be denied. ...*(Interruptions)*... Those who have given notice today should not be denied. Hon. Chairman has included all the names. After that, you can speak. ...*(Interruptions)*... Do you want to say something? ...*(Interruptions)*... Okay, please speak. ...*(Interruptions)*... I will call you. ...*(Interruptions)*... After the hon. Minister, I will call you.

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (DR. NAJMA A. HEPTULLA): I can't give a notice being a Minister, but I would like to speak.

SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR (Himachal Pradesh): After the Zero Hour ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I will call you after the hon. Minister.

DR. NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Sir, I am very happy that we have today, in the House, been talking about congratulating each other on this Women's Day. I agree that all women Members should speak as the Prime Minister, while replying on the Vote of Thanks to President's Address in Lok Sabha, had said, "I wish that only women Members of Parliament should participate in any debate on the 8th March." Anyway, Sir, I am very thankful to you and Mr. Chairman for having allowed us.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thereby, you are denying the chances of all Ministers!

DR. NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Sir, I feel not just women, the time now has come for men too to speak about the empowerment of women and accept it. I remember that in 1995, when I came back from the Beijing Conference where we lead the delegation me and the Minister of Human Resource Development Madhav Rao Sindhia at that time. I came back from Beijing and I requested Mr. Chairman to be in the Chair so that I could

speak from my seat. Perhaps, it was just one occasion that the Deputy Chairman was allowed to speak from the floor. I mentioned in 1995 that the 33 per cent reservation which India committed at the Conference in Beijing should be accepted in our House and for that legislation be brought. I am very happy that this House, Rajya Sabha, passed the legislation, a Constitutional Amendment. It is pending in the Lok Sabha and I hope that this year, perhaps, the Bill will be passed.

Sir, it is not a question of only women coming to Legislatures. There was a big Conference that the hon. Speaker had called in the last two days, Saturday and Sunday, of all woman Legislators, regardless of their party affiliations. It was an all-party women's congregation. While I appreciate the Speaker's initiative, I am very happy to say that the hon. Prime Minister was present on both the days. On the first day, the hon. President and Mr. Chairman addressed them and gave the support to the empowerment of women. On the first day, the hon. Prime Minister was not participating, but he was present there to show his commitment.

Sir, we are very happy that many more women are coming into Legislatures, to Parliament and Assemblies, but when ordinary women get the power, that day I would be very happy. The power which is today with me is because I am holding a position. The power which I had as a Deputy Chairman was because of the position I held and everybody, all men and women, had to listen to me. To all my men friends I say that if your wife's or your mother's or your daughter's opinion is taken seriously in your home, in the society, that day I feel that all women are empowered. In spite of everybody's effort, still we see so many discriminations. Many times, in the House, we have talked about discrimination against women, violence against women. Let us pass a resolution today from our House that all of us will work towards a cleaner society where women and girls are protected so that they could move around in the society and in the country with confidence. And this message should go from nowhere else but the Rajya Sabha, which has already given empowerment to women. Thank you, Sir. I wish you all the very best on the Women's Day.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay; thank you. In fact, the Rajya Sabha can take pride in the fact that we passed the Women Reservation Bill. I am sure all of us expect and hope that that will become the law of the land. From our part, as individual Members, each one of us will be trying our best to see to it that Bill becomes a law, and that is the day we are hoping to see. Okay; it is for all of you to decide what should happen.

Now, Zero Hour submission. All women Members have been allowed by the hon. Chairman.

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